

# Samuel Mulliken's Account Book

By Damon Di Mauro (MA)

**S**amuel Mulliken the younger (1761–1847) is by no means the least illustrious member of one of the most illustrious clock-making families of the 18th century.<sup>1</sup> Examples of his clocksmanship have been deemed worthy of enshrinement in Americana's pantheon of masterpieces.<sup>2</sup> The basic biographical details that have been passed down paint his portrait in broad brushstrokes: he was born in Haverhill, MA, on September 22, 1761<sup>3</sup>; he served an apprenticeship in nearby Newburyport with his cousin, Jonathan Mulliken (1740–82),<sup>4</sup> the son of another eminent clock maker, Samuel Mulliken the elder (1720–56); he married Jonathan Mulliken's widow on August 20, 1783, and set up his own shop in Newburyport; he later removed to Salem, where he engaged in clock-making through much of the 1790s; finally, he settled in Lynn, where he served as postmaster and ran a tannery.

Samuel Mulliken's portrait can now be cast in greater relief. In 1917, the Essex Institute (today the Peabody Essex Museum) purchased his account book (1783–92) from Henry Tilton Lummus,<sup>5</sup> then a District Court judge in Lynn.<sup>6</sup> A handwritten note on the inner jacket indicates only that it was "found in [the] attic of his house."<sup>7</sup> To the author's knowledge, the account book, spanning some of Mulliken's most active clock-making years,<sup>8</sup> has remained unexamined for the past century. It consists of 100 leaves, while some 30 others appear to have been excised and several others still, although intact, defy legibility; this makes the calculation of total clock production difficult. The entries are also not strictly chronological. Nevertheless, the account book provides a fresh reservoir of information on



Mulliken's early career, with hundreds of items to probe and consider. It most certainly merits a monograph of its own. Given the constraints of a journal article, however, it can only be described here in schematic form. To the author's inexperienced eyes, there are some key takeaways from the account book with respect to what has heretofore been known of the man and his craft.

- It suggests that he moved his shop to Haverhill for approximately two years (1787–88).
- It establishes that he repaired southward to Salem in November 1788, as opposed to Lynn (ca. 1789–90) as has previously been advanced.<sup>9</sup>
- It demonstrates that the watch-repair dimension of his business was far more extensive than may have been previously assumed.

## Initial Venture Into Salem

Independent of the account book in question, there is evidence to suggest that Samuel Mulliken made an initial foray into Salem, striking out on his own as a full-fledged journeyman just after his apprenticeship, which may have ended with Jonathan Mulliken's death in June 1782. On August 12, 1782, while still in Newburyport, Samuel Mulliken served as a witness to a sale of land having belonged to Jonathan Mulliken (the sale was held by the executors of Jonathan Mulliken's estate).<sup>10</sup> Just eight days later, on August 20, 1782, he was in Salem serving again as a witness, this time to the purchase of a four-gun and ten-crew brigantine named *Adventure*.<sup>11</sup> The confirmation that this was Samuel Mulliken, the clock maker, comes from a notice placed in the *Salem Gazette* in January 1783:

**Figure 1.** Samuel Mulliken tall case clock signed from Haverhill. PHOTO BY PAUL FOLEY, COURTESY OF DELANEY ANTIQUE CLOCKS.

THE Gentleman who received a SILVER WATCH, by mistake, on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> instant, is desired to return it to the subscriber, in exchange for his own, that being the property of another person. SAM. MULLIKEN.<sup>12</sup>

The debacle surely impressed upon the young Mulliken the need to keep more accurate records.<sup>13</sup> He was back in Newburyport in August 1783 to pledge his troth to Jonathan's widow Susanna (née Pearson). The new couple may have resided in Newburyport until March 1784, when the children of Susanna's previous marriage to Jonathan—Samuel (age 15), Michael (age 13), and Nathaniel (age 8)<sup>14</sup>—were placed in guardianship.<sup>15</sup> The pair then appears to have established residence in Salem for the next two years, since their own sons Jonathan (May 26, 1784) and William (September 17, 1785) were born there.<sup>16</sup> It is not clear why Mulliken left Salem once again to return to Newburyport, although he may have felt crowded out by James Davenport who, in mid-1784, began advertising in earnest as a “WATCH and CLOCK-MAKER from LONDON.”<sup>17</sup>

## Newburyport Shop

The opening entry in Samuel Mulliken's account book dates from “Newbury Port December 7, 1785”<sup>18</sup> and contains a list of articles purchased “for the store,” including 9,000 bricks, 4,000 nails, latches, hinges, and boards, in addition to costs incurred for laborers to haul planks, dig a cellar, and construct a fence. The new venture indicates that Mulliken considered business to be promising, for it was the wont of other contemporary clock makers to have their shop in a front room of their residence.<sup>19</sup> But a poll and property report conducted by the town of Newburyport in 1785 shows that the only other outbuilding on his land was a barn.<sup>20</sup> Mulliken's store project seems all the more ambitious because the local economy was especially anemic at the time (mainly due to stagnation in the shipbuilding industry). During these postwar years, Newburyport residents came to find that self-governance did not immediately result in financial prosperity.<sup>21</sup>

Mulliken's debtors' ledger commences *in medias res* in December 1785; he refers several times to accounts “brought from another book.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the initial years of his clock-making career remain undiscovered. As would be expected, his clientele was largely local, with occasional mention of dealings with customers from surrounding towns.<sup>23</sup> During his Newburyport period, the extant pages of the account book reveal that he sold the following:

- A total of four uncased 8-day clocks—for £10 each—to “Mr. Stephen Toppan,” “Mr. Jonathan Pearson Jr.” (to whom he also sold “glass” for 6s and “balls,” which the author assumes to be finials, for 9s), “Mr. Atkinson the Hatter,” and “Mr. Robert Rogers” (to whom he also sold a “Second hand Clock Case” for 4s-4d)<sup>24</sup>

- One “24 hour clock” to baker “Joseph Pearson” for £5<sup>25</sup>
- One “time peace” to “Benjamin Somersby” and another to “Mr. Sawyer [?] Shoemaker of Newbury” for £3-12s each<sup>26</sup>

The rest of Mulliken's activity consisted of clock maintenance and watch repair as well as other light metal work. It is of particular note that he sold several of Simon Willard's patented clock jacks—usually for £3 each<sup>27</sup>—for which he had placed an ad in the local paper in 1785: “Willard's Patent *Clock Jacks*, Made & Sold by *Samuel Mulliken* Newbury-Port.”<sup>28</sup> He happened to sell two of these jacks to famed printer “John M[y]call” for £4-4s. On the same occasion, he apparently fixed his clock “to repeat the quarters.”<sup>29</sup>

## Removal to Haverhill

Samuel Mulliken's parents were John Mulliken (1735?–85) and Susanna Huse (1735–1820).<sup>30</sup> From deed records, we know that his father purchased a dwelling house in 1756 along what is now Water Street in downtown Haverhill, near the Merrimack River.<sup>31</sup> He was a mariner by trade, alive to town affairs, and served as a “Captain” in the state militia during the American Revolution.<sup>32</sup> Some doubt has been cast as to whether the Haverhill-born Samuel Mulliken was the same individual as the clock maker in question here. We now have ironclad proof thereof in the probate records of John Mulliken, who died intestate in 1785, because “Susanna Mulliken widow” is cited alongside her son “Samuel Mulliken clockmaker of Newbury Port.”<sup>33</sup>

A further complicating factor was that several extant Samuel Mulliken tall clocks were signed from Haverhill. One of these clocks is for sale at the time of this writing by Delaney Antique Clocks in West Townsend, MA (Figures 1 and 2). Brooks Palmer, perhaps the doyen of American horological research, was mystified by Samuel Mulliken's Haverhill doppelgänger.<sup>34</sup> While preparing a series of articles in the late 1940s on the clock makers of the Merrimack Valley,<sup>35</sup> Palmer, who himself was Haverhill born and raised, had a sustained correspondence with Mabel D. Mason, curator of the Haverhill Historical Society. At one point, Mason wrote of her contention that Samuel Mulliken had fathered twins while residing in Haverhill. Palmer replied:

You sent a card to me July 1946 saying “Samuel Mulliken had twins born in Haverhill in 1787” and that there is a tall clock with his name on dial & “Haverhill”... Is this the same Samuel Mulliken born in Haverhill... who married Jonathan Mulliken's widow...? If not the same man, there's another Samuel Mulliken—a Haverhill clockmaker. If yes, what's he doing in Haverhill when he's supposed to be at Newburyport?<sup>36</sup>



In fact, the “twins” in question were Samuel and Susanna Mulliken’s sons Jonathan and William, born in Salem in 1784 and 1785 respectively. Mason may have surmised that the boys were twins because they were *baptized* in Haverhill on the same day (June 24, 1787). What Mason seems to have missed is that a daughter, Sarah, was baptized as well in Haverhill at the same time,<sup>37</sup> although it is elsewhere recorded that she was born in Salem on May 31, 1787.<sup>38</sup> Whatever may have been the explanation for the Mullikens’ sojourn in Salem—nearly 30 miles southeast<sup>39</sup>—for Sarah’s birth less than a month earlier, it appears Samuel intended to put down roots in Haverhill, for he “owned the covenant” at the First Parish Church on June 17, 1787.<sup>40</sup> This “Half-Way Covenant” status, while not full membership, allowed him to affiliate with his hometown congregation and have his children christened there.

Samuel Mulliken’s account book as well as other records confirm that he left Newburyport sometime between 1786 and 1787 and became established in Haverhill. The reasons may have been essentially economic because one historian writes:

The winter of 1786-1787 seemed bleak indeed to the residents of Newburyport. There was no sign of improvement in the town’s commercial affairs, shipbuilding had virtually ceased, and the movement toward developing home industries had made no significant progress.<sup>41</sup>

Tax records attest to Samuel Mulliken’s presence in Newburyport during the years 1784–86, though he is no longer levied thereafter.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, he appears on the tax records of the First Parish in Haverhill, in both

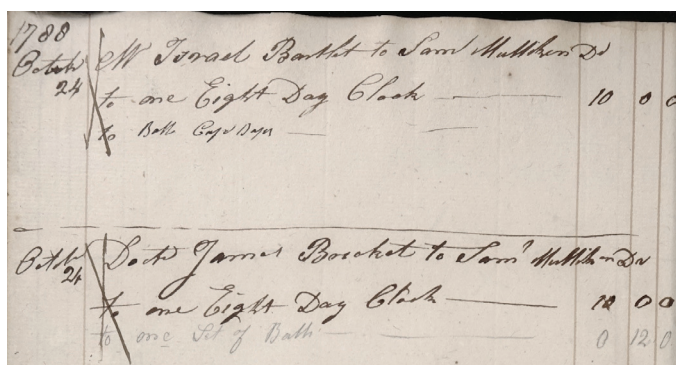


**Figure 2.** Dial of Samuel Mulliken tall case clock signed from Haverhill. PHOTO BY PAUL FOLEY, COURTESY OF DELANEY ANTIQUE CLOCKS.

1787 and 1788. Up until 1785, his father, Captain John Mulliken, had been listed on the rolls; then in 1786, his mother “widow Susanna [Huse] Mulliken” listed in his stead.<sup>43</sup> As the eldest son, he may have come to assume the headship of the Haverhill homestead.

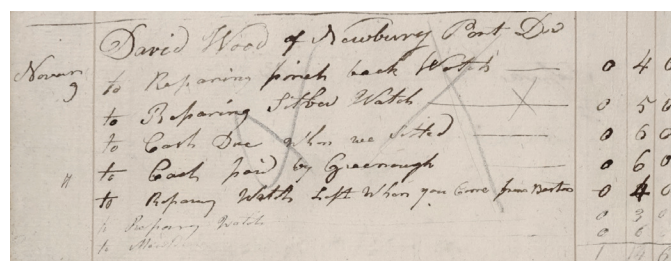
According to Mulliken’s account book, from 1787 onward his clientele hailed mostly from Haverhill as well, although mention was also made of patronage from the surrounding Massachusetts towns of Bradford, Amesbury, and Methuen in addition to New Hampshire locales such as Atkinson, Candia, Derry, and New Salem. During Mulliken’s two-year Haverhill tenure, he sold at least nine 8-day clocks, for £9 or £10, to the following customers (all names are directly quoted from the account book):

- Mr. Willis Patten of Amesbury (to whom he also sold “Glass” for 6s and “Balls” for 9s)
- Mr. Bacon
- Mr. Moses Ayers (to whom he also sold a “Case” for £4-10s and “Balls & Bases” for 15s),
- Enoch Marsh (to whom he also sold “2 Balls” and “Cappitals & Bases” for a price that is illegible)
- Capt. Moses [?]
- William Ayers of New Salem
- Mr. Amos Sawyer (to whom he also sold a “Clock Case” for £2, “1 Set Bases” for 6s, and “1 Set Balls” for 12s)
- Mr. Israel Bartlett (to whom he also sold “Balls” and “Case Bases,” although no price is listed)
- Doctor James Brickett (to whom he also sold “one Set of Balls” for 12s).<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 3.** Detail of accounts with Israel Bartlett and James Brickett, October 24, 1788, Samuel Mulliken account book, MSS 505.

COURTESY OF PHILLIPS LIBRARY, PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MA.



**Figure 4.** Detail of account with David Wood, November 9, Samuel Mulliken account book, MSS 505. COURTESY OF PHILLIPS LIBRARY, PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MA.



The latter two customers (Figure 3) were especially prominent in town and state affairs, and both played significant roles during the Revolutionary War.<sup>45</sup> Mulliken sold a handful of other timepieces while in Haverhill, for about £3 each, and continued to service clocks and watches, whether for maintenance or repair. Of particular interest is a November 1787 entry showing David Wood,<sup>46</sup> who would found a clock-making shop of his own in Newburyport in 1792, turning to Mulliken for various watch transactions (Figure 4).

Mulliken seems to have closed his Haverhill shop in October 1788. His wife Susanna had died the previous winter, apparently of yellow fever.<sup>47</sup> A terse necrological notice appeared in the *Essex Journal* in January 1788 mentioning her passing: “DIED—Mrs. Mulliken, consort of Mr. Samuel Mulliken.”<sup>48</sup>

### Establishment in Salem

The first Salem entry of Samuel Mulliken’s account book dates from November 24, 1788.<sup>49</sup> As early as December 6, he began engaging in clock-related work for renowned cabinet maker–merchants Elijah Sanderson (1751-1825) and Jacob Sanderson (1757-1810)<sup>50</sup>: “Cleaning 2 Clocks,” “Wasshing the Faces,” “Grooving the Barrells,” and “fixing the Day of

the Month.”<sup>51</sup> Were these repairs made in preparation for the Sanderson brothers’ upcoming shipment of furniture “to the southward” on the schooner *Ruth*? Among the items listed on the ship’s December 13 invoice were “4 Clocks with mehogany Cases @ £20, £80-0-0.”<sup>52</sup> On January 6, 1789, the Mulliken account book reveals that he is again at work for the Sandersons, “Repairing Clock for Quarters.”<sup>53</sup> He went on to do a great deal of light brass casting work for the brothers, presumably for other furniture shipments, making such items as “rose handels,” “lifting handels,” and “hinges,” in addition to supplying clock-related articles such as “capt[itals] & basses,” “3 Set of Clock Balls,” “24 Wires for Clock Case Hands,” and “20 Large Wires [for Clock Case Hands].”<sup>54</sup> For what it may be worth, Elijah Sanderson, a celebrated veteran of the Battle of Lexington, had married Mary Mulliken on January 2, 1781. She was the daughter of famed clock maker Nathaniel Mulliken (1722–77).<sup>55</sup> Since Samuel Mulliken was her cousin, his working relationship with the merchant-minded brothers may have begun during his first foray into Salem.<sup>56</sup>

By March 1789, Samuel Mulliken was already remarried, to Sarah Newhall (1765-1807), daughter of Colonel Ezra Newhall, who had been at Valley Forge and taken part in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Colonel Newhall



**Figure 5.** George Washington Felt (1776–1847, United States) View of Court House Square, Salem, 1810–20 Oil on wood panel 37 1/2 x 52 inches (95.25 x 132.08 cm). Gift of the estate of B. F. Brown, 1919. 108499. PHOTO BY WALTER SILVER, COURTESY OF PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM.



was originally from Lynn, though after the war, he settled in Salem, where he was appointed by President Washington to serve as Collector of Internal Revenue.<sup>57</sup> We can pinpoint the location of Mulliken's shop—on the corner of Court Street in Salem (Figure 5)—from an ad he placed several times in the *Salem Mercury* (Figure 6).<sup>58</sup> This locale is confirmed by the 1793 memoir of Colonel Benjamin Pickman (1741–1819), who adds that it was “on Northey's land.” He refers to Mulliken not only as a “watchmaker,” but also as a “brass founder.”<sup>59</sup>

In any event, by midyear 1789, Mulliken was evidently in better straits, having contracted an upwardly mobile marriage to a Revolutionary War hero's daughter, established a new shop in a bustling business district, and, based on a note on the inside jacket of his account book, found a suitable rental property for his household—“Mr. Derby's house”—at a rate of \$38 per annum.<sup>60</sup> Might this have been the iconic Richard Derby House, built in 1761–62 by Captain Derby for his son Elias Haskel Derby, who was to become America's first millionaire? “King Derby,” as he has been dubbed, moved from the dwelling in 1778 and it was thereafter rented at times to non-family members. However serendipitously, it was, in fact, in the Derby House, now owned by Historic New England, that Mulliken's masterpiece—the Peabody Essex Museum dwarf clock (Figure 7)—stood for many years on the stairs landing.<sup>61</sup> Or Mulliken might also have rented another dwelling belonging to the prominent Derby clan. He refers several times in the account book to diverse work done on their behalf,<sup>62</sup> including some watch repair references and in one instance “making and fixing brass Work to Case.”<sup>63</sup>

Samuel Mulliken's reputation followed him to Salem. He notes two Haverhill residents, “Moses Marsh” and “John [Mc]Casling,” making the long trek to town and ordering

8-day clocks on the same day, July 29, 1789.<sup>64</sup> Several other 8-day clocks were purchased for between £8 and £10 each over the next two years by those Mulliken identifies as follows<sup>65</sup>:

- Henry Oliver of Lynn
- Messrs Sandersons
- Mr. Bancroft
- Mr. Thomas Cross (to whom he also sells a “set [of] balls” for 9s)
- Samuel Blyth
- Mr. William Bacon.

Mr. George Ward purchased an 8-day clock with a mahogany case for £16.<sup>66</sup> The following customers bought timepieces for between £3 and £6<sup>67</sup>:

- Mr. Samuel Jo[h]nson of Lynn
- Mr. Goodhue
- Mr. Nicolls
- William Archer
- Mr. Benjamin Blodchet [Blodgett?]
- Mr. Robert Peals
- Mr. Hutcheson
- Mr. Banks.

Mulliken continued to sell a great of number of clock-jacks for about £2 apiece.<sup>68</sup> As for “Mr. Robert Cowan,” an ornamental painter of note, he undertook several clock-specific tasks, some of which are undoubtedly interrelated: “Making hands pulleys &c for an Old Clock” (6s), “Making Moon Weal” (6s), “Making 1 Clock movement” (£5-16s), “1 Clock bell” (3s), and “1 glass” (1s).<sup>69</sup>

The 1790 census of Salem, MA, reveals that the recomposed Mulliken family numbered nine souls: three “Free white Males of 16 years old, and upwards,” three “Free white Males, under 16 years,” and three “Free white Females.”<sup>70</sup> Second wife Sarah gave birth to six children.<sup>71</sup> She died in Lynn in 1807, when she was 40 years old.<sup>72</sup> It is probable that Samuel Mulliken's younger brother Joseph (1771-95), who was most certainly also an apprentice, was included in the Mulliken household in the 1790 census. The account book shows that Samuel later took responsibility for Joseph's “board.”<sup>73</sup> Joseph may even have done contract work for his elder brother. The dating is inexact due to a missing page, but in the early 1790s, the expense side of the account book indicates that Samuel Mulliken hired a worker to do various clock-making tasks for him:

- Making and finishing 2 Clocks (£2-8s)
- Making 1 Clock Movement (18s)

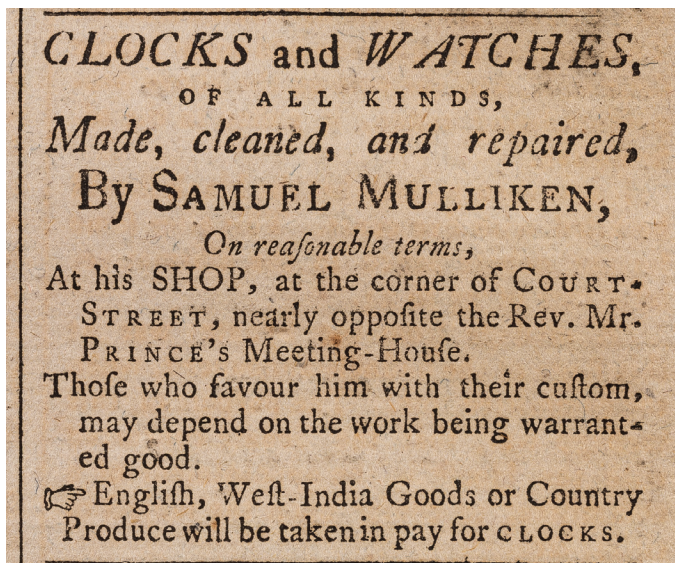


Figure 6. *Salem Mercury*, May 26, 1789:3. COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

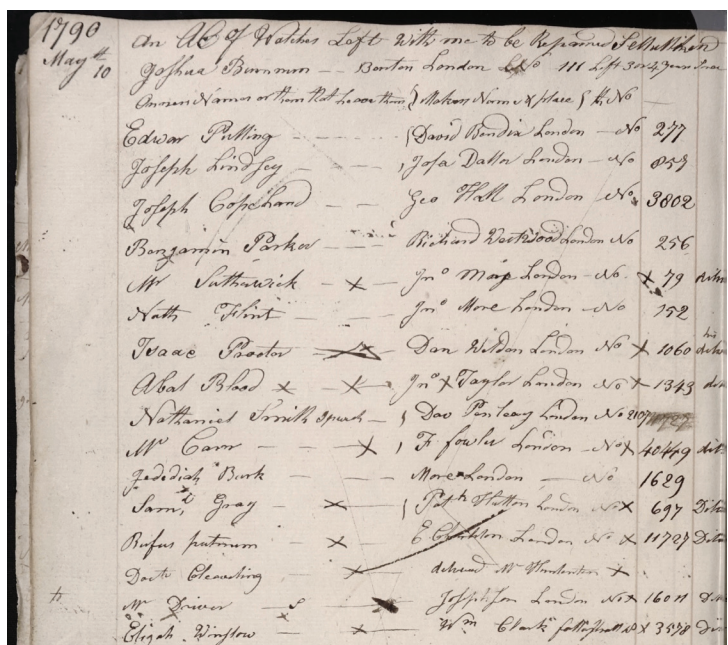


- Making time peace (9s)
- Fixing 2 Old Clocks (10s)
- Making 3 Clock Movements" (£3-4s).<sup>74</sup>

With the contract work, Samuel might have been attempting to help launch his brother's career. In any event, by 1793 Joseph was ready to spread his wings and advertised twice in the *Salem Gazette*: "Joseph Mulliken INFORMS the Public, that he has taken an apartment in STEARNS AND WALDO'S Brick Store, in Court-Street, where he carries on the Clock and Watch-making Business, and REPAIRING, with punctuality and dispatch."<sup>75</sup> Joseph died just two years later in 1795, at the tender age of 24.<sup>76</sup>

What is especially significant about Samuel Mulliken's professional reset in Salem is that his watch repair business seemed to enter into its own and flourish. Dates were haphazardly kept and some gaps exist, but the account book reveals that he repaired some 20 watches per month at the start of his Salem sojourn and soon was repairing upward of 50. For each watch taken in for repair, Mulliken took due note of the owner, maker, and serial number of the movement (Figure 8). There are 17 leaves devoted to this aspect of his work, accounting for approximately 500 entries.<sup>77</sup> Not only do these notations speak about Mulliken's nouveau riche clientele in Salem,<sup>78</sup> but they provide a wealth of information concerning the European

**Figure 7, right.** Samuel Mulliken II (1761–1847, Salem, Massachusetts) Dwarf clock, 1790 Mahogany, pine, brass, and steel 38 1/2 x 11 3/4 x 7 inches (97.79 x 29.845 17.78 cm) Museum purchase, 1994. 137713. PHOTO BY JEFFREY DYKES, COURTESY OF PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM.



**Figure 8.** May 10, 1790, Samuel Mulliken account book, MSS 505. COURTESY OF PHILLIPS LIBRARY, PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MA.

watches that were circulating in the former colony at the time. The vast majority of watches seen in Mulliken's shop originated in London, although some issued from other major cities such as Liverpool, Dublin, or Paris. Among the most immediately recognizable watch maker names are Londoners Joseph Windmills, John Champion, John Byfield, Walter Mitchelson, George Hall, Richard Westwood, and Patrick Hutton, as well as Dubliner John Smith.<sup>79</sup> It would require a separate study to do justice to what might be called the "Mulliken watchbook." Suffice it to say that business must have been on the upswing, thus it is no wonder Mulliken himself would seek to import old-world watches to Salem, as evidenced by a 1792 ad in the Salem Gazette: "*Just received from LONDON, and for sale by Samuel Mulliken, in SALEM, a few new Watches.*"<sup>80</sup> When it came to his own personal use, however, as an entry on the expense side of the account book seems to suggest, he opted for a "gold French Watch," bought for £9.<sup>81</sup>

The last entries in the account book date from 1792, simply for want of writing space. Mulliken remained in Salem four more years. Little is known about his activity during that time, except that he continued to work for the Sandersons. A receipt of payment exists, in the brothers' own papers, showing work done in 1794 and 1795, including "1 Clock sent southward" for £9-4s.<sup>82</sup> Also in April 1793, the Rev. William Bentley, polymath and minister of the Second Congregational Church in Salem, noted in his diary a singular event in the life of his parish, "The clock was hoisted this afternoon into the steeple after being cleansed by Mr. Mulliken."<sup>83</sup> It would appear, then, that clock tower maintenance can be added to the dossier of Samuel Mulliken's horological career.

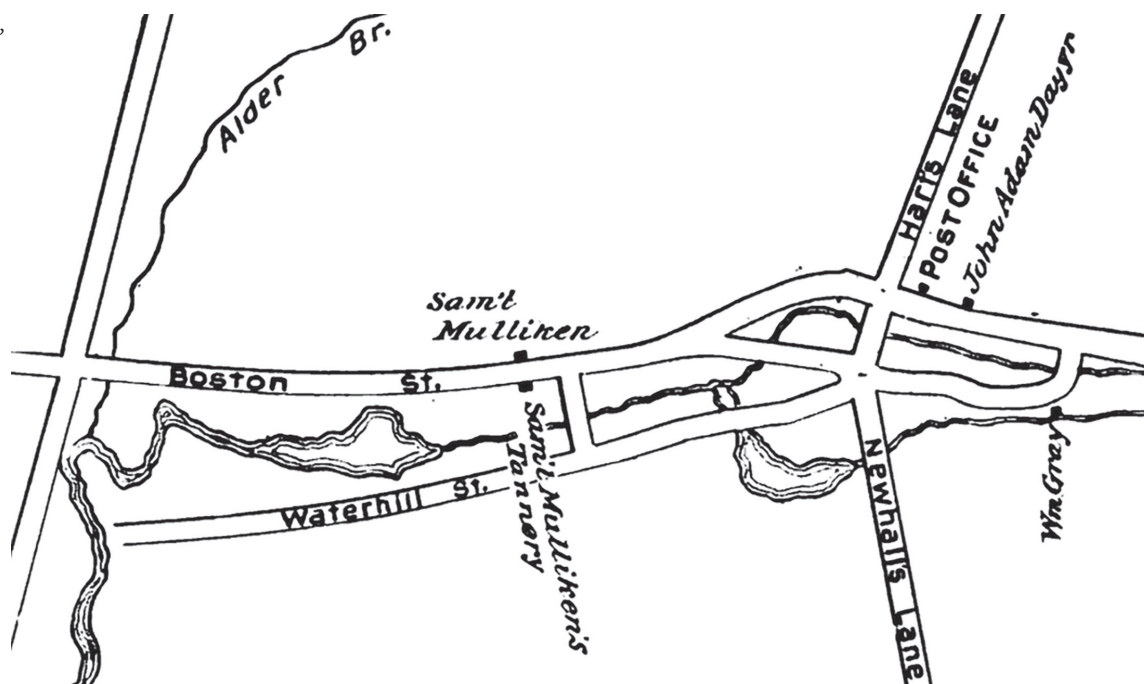
## Reinvention in Lynn

In 1796, Samuel Mulliken left Salem and bought property in Lynn. He began tanning there and also built a long tenement house that for many years after his death was known as "Mulliken's block."<sup>84</sup> At the same time, in a shop on the square, he is said to have continued "making clocks and casting locks and other articles of brass."<sup>85</sup> Although no Lynn-signed clocks are known to exist, there is a reference in 1809 to a furniture auction that featured "one Mulliken Brass Jack,"<sup>86</sup> as if it were a known commodity. Mulliken was also the third postmaster of the town, serving in that capacity from 1803 to 1807. His office was situated first on Boston Street but was moved to the south end of Federal Street when the turnpike opened.<sup>87</sup> He took up residence nearby in the "Old Burrell House," a pre-1700 many-gabled mansion.<sup>88</sup> His home was directly across from his tannery, a short walk from the Post Office (Figure 9). He married a third time, to Lydia Fuller, on May 15, 1808,<sup>89</sup> with whom he had two more children.<sup>90</sup> By all accounts, Mulliken did "a large business" in Lynn and was "a man of worth," although he was said by town historians to have "possessed some occasionally uncomfortable gifts, among which was a notably uncompromising will, which sometimes led to untoward consequences."<sup>91</sup>

A contemporary who knew Samuel Mulliken, Judge James R. Newhall (1809–93), who was also a printer and town historian, relates two colorful anecdotes that serve to illustrate his singular personality. Perhaps they also provide a glimpse into the tenacity with which he may have conducted himself as a clock maker in previous years:

It was a common custom in those days—which were before the time of railroads—for two

**Figure 9.** Map of Lynn, 1776 to 1803.





business men to visit Boston together. One would furnish the horse and chaise and the other pay for the horse-baiting and the tolls. This was an economical and sociable arrangement. It one day happened that Mr. Mulliken and a neighbor—who in disposition was quite as set as he—started for Boston under the tactic arrangement indicated. They arrived in Charlestown in due time... but now an unforeseen obstacle confronted them. An additional toll of some six cents had been imposed for crossing the bridge into Boston... Our travelers each declared that it did not fall on him to pay,—Mr. M. arguing that Mr. W. was to pay the tolls and Mr. W. arguing that the new toll could not be included in the arrangement, as neither knew of its existence. There they sat arguing hour after hour, until the declining sun warned them that it would be useless to cross over at all, as they would be too late for any business. So they turned their horse and jogged homeward. Mr. Mulliken was more than eighty years old when he related this adventure, and Mr. Newhall says it will not be easy to forget the energy with which he brought down his cane at the conclusion and exclaimed, “Yes, and I would have remained there till this day before I would have paid that toll.”<sup>92</sup>

Judge Newhall also observes that Samuel Mulliken allowed the poor of the neighborhood to gather up refuse tan to serve as fuel for fire during the winter. One aged woman, however, incurred his ire and he forbade her from further roving around his tannery. This provoked her in return, so that she composed a little ditty at his expense as she made her begging rounds, “Mister Muddiken’s got ad mudh ad ted tond o’tadt, ad won’t give poor old Audt Hadah Hudsondt wodt gradt” (“Mr. Mulliken has got as much as ten ton of tan, and won’t give poor old Aunt Hannah Hudson one grain”).<sup>93</sup>

Samuel Mulliken closed his days on November 25, 1847, in Lynn. He died of “old age and dropsy.” Although he had been a successful postmaster and tanner in the town for more than half a century, he was still known until the end by his fellow citizens, as death records indicating his occupation reveal, as a “watchmaker.”<sup>94</sup>

## Acknowledgments

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## About the Author

Damon Di Mauro teaches in the Department of English, Languages, & Linguistics at Gordon College in Wenham, MA. He is still in his freshman year as a member of the NAWCC.

## Notes and References

1. The Mulliken family mystique is further enhanced by an intimate association with some of the watershed moments of the American Revolution. Jonathan Mulliken (1740–82) engraved an expert facsimile of Paul Revere's plate of the Boston Massacre. It was issued in Newburyport in 1770. Nathaniel Mulliken Jr. (1752–76) was a Lexington patriot of the first hour. See his public deposition printed by the Provincial Congress, *A Narrative, of the Excursion and Ravages of the King's Troops Under the Command of General Gage, on the nineteenth of April, 1775: Together with the Depositions...*, Massachusetts-Bay: Worcester. Printed by Isaiah Thomas, by order of the Provincial Congress, 1775, 9–10. The British troops also burned the family homestead and the Minuteman's clock shop, as was noted in the narrations of contemporary newspapers: see the *Essex Journal*, April 26, 1775:1.
2. See the example of Mulliken's famed dwarf clock in Hohmann FL III. *Timeless: Masterpiece American Brass Dial Clocks*. New York: Hohmann Holdings LLC, 2009:154–55. See also Crom TR. An American beauty: the Samuel Mulliken II, Salem, Mass., dwarf clock. *NAWCC Bulletin* 1995;37(299):756–61.
3. The Byzantine tangle of family relations has proved daunting to many researchers. The surname is spelled several different ways in the early records, and given names tend to repeat themselves within even the same generation. For a helpful family tree of the principal clock makers, see Newman R, Forman B. Nathaniel Mulliken & his clockmaking tools. *Watch & Clock Bulletin* 2015;57(416):330. The most comprehensive resource, however, although itself contradictory at times, remains Ridlon GT. *History of the Families Millingas and Millanges of Saxony and Normandy: Comprising Genealogies and Biographies of Their Posterity Surnamed Milliken, Millikin, Millikan, Millican, Milligan, Mulliken and Mullikin, A. D. 800-A. D. 1907*. Lewiston, ME: Self-published, 1907.
4. See Currier JJ. *History of Newburyport, Mass: 1764-1905*. Vol. 1. Newburyport, MA: Self-published, 1906:166.
5. *Annual Report of the Essex Institute for the Year Ending May 6, 1918*, Salem, MA: The Institute, 1918:17.
6. Henry Tilton Lummus (1876–1960) later served as a member of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and wrote many landmark decisions. He also published a book in 1937, *The Trial Judge*, which to this day is still given to every newly appointed trial judge in Massachusetts. See DeMarco P. Late judge gets very honorable mention: court pays respects to a pioneer of law. *The Boston Globe*, November 8, 2007.
7. *Samuel Mulliken Account Book*, MSS 505, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. It will be referred to hereafter as MSS 505.
8. Although the bibliographic notice in the catalog states that the manuscript dates from 1783, these earliest entries are found on leaves 72 recto to 74 verso. They also only concern real estate dealings and have nothing to do with clock-making. Two other sections are dated 1784 and have to do with charges relative to the guardianship of two of Jonathan's sons (see leaves 80 verso to 81 verso). The entries related to clock-making and watch repair cover only the years 1785–92.
9. Spittler SL, Spittler TJ, Bailey CH. *Clockmakers & Watchmakers of America by Name and Place*. Columbia, PA: National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors, Inc., 2011:291.
10. *Essex Registry of Deeds, South District*, Book 141:48.
11. *Naval Records of the American Revolution 1775-1788*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906:222.
12. *Salem Gazette*, January 30, 1783:1. This advertisement is also cited by Harris JC. *The Clock and Watch Makers Advertiser*. Sussex, England: Antiquarian Horological Society, 2003:318.
13. Later in life, Samuel Mulliken also kept a daybook and ledger of his tannery business (1799–1820). It is now owned by the Library of Congress.
14. On Jonathan Mulliken's three sons, see Ridlon's *History of the Families Millingas and Millanges*, 204-05. Samuel (1769-1851), the eldest, briefly removed to Hallowell, Maine, where he had a clock-making shop, but soon returned to Newburyport and became a bank cashier. The middle son, Michael (1771-98), died young. The final son, Nathaniel (1776-1847), was a clock maker and resided in Hallowell, Maine for a number of years.
15. *Essex Registry of Deeds, South District*, Book 141:228-29.
16. *Vital Records of Salem Massachusetts*, Vol. 2 Births, Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1918:92.
17. *Salem Gazette*, May 11, 1784:3; May 15, 1784:4; May 25, 1784:4.
18. MSS 505, leaf 1 recto.
19. See the remarks of Sarah Smith Emery on this score, *Reminiscences of a Nonagenarian*. Newburyport, William H. Huse, 1879:232: "Mr. David Wood made clocks, in a shop which was one of the front rooms of



- his dwelling house on State Street. It was common to convert the front room of a house into a shop. Most of the smaller grocery and variety stores were kept in this way.” There is also the possibility that Mulliken was vacating a previous space for a larger one, because he placed a curious ad in the local paper just six months earlier: “TO BE LET, A VERY CONVENIENT STORE, Suitable for WHOLESAL & RETAIL... Enquire of SAMUEL MULLIKEN,” *Essex Journal*, June 22, 1785:4.
20. Samuel Mulliken had a three-quarter share of a dwelling. The remaining quarter was held by the widow Sara Pike—Jonathan’s mother—who had remarried Timothy Pike (see “Assessors Tax Valuations,” Box 69, Folder 8, Newburyport Public Library Archival Center). There were also six males and three females under Mulliken’s roof at the time.
  21. Although the town grew by several hundred and some 30 new homes were built between 1780 and 1786, shipbuilding and commercial export were still languishing. See on this subject Labaree BW. *Patriots and Partisans: The Merchants of Newburyport, 1764-1815*. New York: Norton, 1975:62–66.
  22. MSS 505, leaves 1 verso, 2 verso, 4 verso, 5 verso.
  23. Among his better-known clients were town officer Enoch Titcomb (1747–1814) and Revolutionary War hero Jonathan Titcomb. See Cushing C. *The History and Present State of the Town of Newburyport*. Newburyport: E.W. Allen, 1826:103.
  24. MSS 505, leaves 3 verso, 8 verso, 10 verso.
  25. *Ibid.*, leaf 3 verso.
  26. *Ibid.*, leaves 6 verso and 8 verso. This latter sale also seems to be the last entry in Newburyport, dated October 1786.
  27. MSS 505, leaves 2 verso, 4 verso, 5 verso, 6 verso.
  28. *Essex Journal*, June 8, 1785:2.
  29. MSS 505, leaf 2 verso.
  30. See *Vital Records of Haverhill Massachusetts*, Vol. 1 Births, Topsfield, MA: Topsfield Historical Society, 1910:229.
  31. *Essex Registry of Deeds, South District*, Book 103, 97. The deed was recorded on July 15, 1756. The lot consisted of “thirty two rods of land” and was situated “on the north side of the Way of the Parsonage so called.” It was also bounded by the lots of John Hall, Capt. John Pecker, and Samuel White. We know that this dwelling was near the river because Pecker operated a wharf there, which itself was near the ferry. See Chase GW. *History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*. Haverhill: Self-published, 1861:332–33.
  32. See *ibid.*, 394, 399, 428.
  33. *Essex County Probate Records*, June 27, 1785, 19085:5.
  34. Palmer tended to assume they were separate clockmakers. *The Book of American Clocks*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967:247.
  35. See Palmer B. Clockmakers of Bradford Massachusetts. *Antiques Journal* 1950(Feb):19–21; Newburyport Clockmakers Part I. *Antiques Journal* 1950(June):18–19, 30; Newburyport Clockmakers Part II. *Antiques Journal* 1950 (July):22–24; Haverhill Massachusetts Merrimack Valley Clockmaking—Chapter III. *Antiques Journal* 1950(Nov):19–21, 43.
  36. Letter dated September 24, 1949, Haverhill Public Library Special Collections. Palmer followed two days later with another dispatch on September 26, 1949: “Help! I’m in trouble again on the Mullikens... Was this Samuel back in Haverhill before going to Salem and Lynn... or is there another Samuel to plague my records?”
  37. Instead, it appears Samuel Mulliken had all three children (Jonathan, Sarah, and William) baptized in Haverhill on June 24, 1787. See *Vital Records of Haverhill Massachusetts*, Vol. 1 Births. Topsfield, MA: Topsfield Historical Society, 1910:229–230.
  38. *Vital Records of Salem Massachusetts*, Vol. 2 Births. Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1918:92.
  39. Famed jurist and political figure Leverett Saltonstall made frequent trips between Haverhill and Salem in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. According to his diary, if travelling was good, the trek would take four hours. If bad, it might take a day. See Moody RE, *The Saltonstall Papers, 1607-1815*, Vol. 2: 1791-1815, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1974: 220, 284.
  40. *Records of First Parish, Haverhill*, comp. by Mary F. M. Raymond, unpublished manuscript, Haverhill Public Library, 1895:85, 156. Samuel Mulliken was himself baptized in the parish on October 4, 1761.
  41. See Labaree’s *Patriots and Partisans*, 67.
  42. See “Assessors Tax Valuations,” Box 69, Folders 6-8, Newburyport Public Library Archival Center. Tax valuations for the year 1786 are found at the Museum of Old Newbury (call no. B1F3).
  43. See “Tax Records of the First Parish 1751-1807,” Haverhill Special Collections. In 1792, the surviving members of the Mulliken family sold a lot of land to Peter Bradley of Haverhill. Both Samuel and his younger brother Joseph were said at the time to be

- “clockmakers” in Salem (*Essex Registry of Deeds, South District*, Book 154:252-253).
44. MSS 505, leaves 11 verso, 13 verso, 16 verso, 17 verso, 20 verso, 21 verso. Mulliken also took an order for a tall clock from Mr. Nathaniel Eaton, although it does not appear to have ever been fulfilled (13 verso).
  45. Bartlett was twice State Senator from Haverhill. Brickett was at Bunker Hill and was later promoted to Brigadier General as the war expanded. See Chase GW. *History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*. 1861:374-375, 380-386, 391-392, 394, 399-404, 412, 621, 644, 661.
  46. MSS 505, leaf 15 verso. Even odder, Wood visited Mulliken in his Salem shop on July 16, 1789 (see 23 verso).
  47. See Ridlon's *History of the Families Millingas and Millanges*, 201
  48. *Essex Journal* January 30, 1788:3. A month later, the *Salem Mercury* also mentioned the demise of “Mrs. Mulliken, wife of Mr. Samuel Mulliken,” although it mistakenly places the event in Newburyport (February 5, 1788:5). A press did not exist in Haverhill until 1793 (see Chase's *History of Haverhill*, 652), which also accounts for the lack of any local advertisements on Mulliken's part.
  49. MSS 505, leaf 71 verso.
  50. On these enterprising brothers, see Swan MM. Elijah and Jacob Sanderson, early Salem cabinetmakers. *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, Vol. LXX, No. 4. October 1934(Oct):323-364. As well as Belknap HW. Furniture Exported by Cabinet Makers of Salem, with Special Reference to the Sandersons, *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, Vol. LXXXV, No. 4, October 1949(Oct):334-359.
  51. MSS 505, leaf 21 verso.
  52. Swan's *Elijah and Jacob Sanderson*, 326.
  53. MSS 505, leaf 21 verso.
  54. Ibid. leaves 29 verso, 36 verso, 53 verso, 69 verso.
  55. At the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Lexington, Elijah Sanderson gave a formal deposition recounting its main events, including the British setting fire “to widow Mulliken's house; then to the shop of Nathaniel Mulliken, a watch and clock maker” (see *Independent Chronicle & Boston Patriot*, April 27, 1825:2).
  56. Mary Mulliken had a brother named Samuel (see Ridlon's *History of the Families Millingas and Millanges*, 201) and this led to the false assumption that she and the clock maker under discussion here were siblings. Rather, they were cousins.
  57. Waters HF. *The Newhall Family of Lynn, Massachusetts, Part 1*. Salem: Printed for the Essex Institute, 1882:69.
  58. *Salem Mercury*, May 26, 1789:3; June 2, 1789:4; June 9, 1789:4; June 16, 1789:4; July 14, 1789:4.
  59. Pickman B. Some account of houses and other buildings in Salem, from a manuscript of the late Col. Benj. Pickman. *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute*, Vol. 6, No. 3. 1864(June):103. An editor's note indicates that the shop was later used for the same purpose by Benjamin Balch, then Balch & Smith, and finally by a Mr. Lamson. Ibid. 104.
  60. MSS 505, inside jacket.
  61. See Crom's *An American beauty*, 756-61.
  62. MSS 505: [Elias] Hasket Derby (leaf 25 verso); Capt. John Derby (leaf 26 verso); Capt. Richard Derby (leaves 34 verso and 52 verso); Jonathan Derby (leaf 62 verso), Samuel Derby (leaf 65 verso).
  63. Ibid. 21 verso.
  64. Ibid. leaf 24 verso.
  65. Ibid. leaves 26 verso, 29 verso, 31 verso, 35 verso, 42 verso, 44 verso. The name that is immediately striking in this list is Samuel Blyth (1744-1795), the well-known heraldic and commercial painter as well as maker of harpsichords and spinets.
  66. Ibid. leaves 54 verso. This account was settled in 1791. A note on 96 verso states that Mulliken had first agreed in 1790 to the clock with a mahogany case for “32 bushels of wheat and same number of rye.”
  67. Ibid. leaves 25 verso, 27 verso, 30 verso, 33 verso, 44 verso, 54 verso, 57 verso, 70 verso.
  68. By 1789 Willard's five-year “executive privilege for making and vending clock-jacks” (*Salem Gazette*, July 27, 1784:4) had expired and perhaps Mulliken was free to improvise and develop the jack along his own lines. On Mulliken's own version, see *infra* the reference to the “Mulliken Brass Jack.”
  69. MSS 505, leaf 40 verso.
  70. United States Census, 1790, Salem, Massachusetts, Sheet No. 2.
  71. See Reeves DR. *The Breed Family*, Vol. 1. Miami, OK: D.S. Reeves, 2003:92.
  72. *Salem Gazette*, March 3, 1807:3.
  73. MSS 505, leaf 93 recto.
  74. Ibid. leaf 83 recto.
  75. *Salem Gazette*, March 19, 1793:3; April 2, 1793:4. See also Belknap HW. *Artists and Craftsman of*



- Essex County, Massachusetts*. Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1927:108. From 1792 to 1795, Joseph Mulliken himself did light-metal work for the Sanderson brothers. See *Elijah and Jacob Sanderson Papers, 1780-1827*, Phillips Library, MSS 246, Book 1 Folder 5.
76. *Salem Gazette*, August 11, 1795:3; *Independent Chronicle*, August 13, 1795:3. Less than four months later, Irish watchmaker James Dalrymple moved into town and was advertising that he “Intends in a few days commencing business in the Shop the late Mr. Joseph Mulliken occupied, in Court-Street, part of Major Waldo’s Brick-Store” (*Salem Gazette*, December 22, 1795:1).
77. MSS 505, leaves 71 verso, 72 recto, 84 verso, 85 recto, 85 verso, 86 recto 86 verso, 87 recto, 87 recto, 88 recto, 88 verso, 89 recto, 89 verso, 93 verso, 94 recto, 95 recto, 96 verso.
78. Just two years earlier, in 1786, the Rev. William Bentley had stated that there were “few clocks & watches in the Town in families” (*The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts*, Vol. 1. Salem: Essex Institute, 1905:32).
79. I am indebted here to Bob Frishman for his expertise in signaling these figures.
80. *Salem Gazette*, June 26, 1792:4.
81. MSS 505, leaf 59 recto.
82. *Elijah and Jacob Sanderson Papers*, MSS 246, Book 1 Folder 5.
83. *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts*, Vol. 2. Salem: Essex Institute, 1907, 20.
84. *The Register of the Lynn Historical Society, Lynn, Massachusetts for the Year 1897*. Lynn, MA: The Nichols Press, 1898:67.
85. Ibid. 68.
86. *Salem Gazette*, October 24, 1809:3; October 27, 1809:3.
87. Newhall JR. *History of Lynn*, Vol. 2. Lynn, MA: The Nichols Press, 1897:179, 264.
88. Ye ancient city of Lynn. *Boot and Shoe Leather Recorder*, Vol. 21, No. 19, Wednesday August 10, 1892:75.
89. *Vital Records of Lynn, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1849*, Vol. 2—Marriages and Deaths. Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1906:259.
90. The two final children mentioned in Reeves (*The Breed Family*, 92), born in 1810 and 1813, must have issued from the third marriage because second wife Sarah died in 1807. Third spouse Lydia Mulliken died in 1833, in her 50th year. See *Salem Gazette*, March 8, 1833:3; *Newburyport Herald*, March 12, 1833:3.
91. Newhall’s *History of Lynn*, 264–265. See also from Lewis A. Newhall JR: “He was a man of strict integrity and great industry. He had a strong will, which, being usually set in the right direction stood him in good stead.” *History of Lynn*. Boston, MA: John L. Shorey, 1865:417.
92. Ye ancient city of Lynn, *Boot and Shoe Leather Recorder*, 37, 39.
93. Ibid. 37.
94. *Vital Records of Lynn, Massachusetts*, Vol. 2, 542. Mulliken’s passing, in his 86th year, was noted by the *Salem Observer*, Saturday, December 18, 1847, Vol. 25, Issue 51:3.