

Few would be able to accomplish Judge Samuel Holten's lifetime achievements which, in spite of a serious hearing impairment since childhood, earned him the distinction of becoming one of the most notable figures of his time. The epitaph on his gravestone at the Holten Street Cemetery (land donated to the town of Danvers by Samuel Holten) reads: "...Peace to the memory of a man of worth."



The next building projects (**Phase VII**) took place during the first half of the 19th century during the occupancy of Samuel Holten's grand-daughter, Harriet (Putnam) Adams, and her husband Israel Adams. They added a one-storey "Garden Room" and updated the parlor in the Greek Revival style. The small shed next to the double privy was constructed of reused 18th century timber framing from an earlier barn or building. The rear entryways were added after 1840 (**Phase VIII**).



Oil painting (c.1860) depicting the Holten House by Sarah Ingersoll Putnam



Photograph taken in 2007

The house was sold out of the Holten family in 1864, and the two living units within the house were rented until about the time the General Israel Putnam Chapter of the DAR purchased the property in 1921. The chapter members immediately undertook some renovations, including sill and summer beam work and removed two interior walls to make space for chapter meetings. The west side of the house became the living quarters of the first caretakers of the Judge Samuel Holten House, Mr. Franklin Porter, a prominent New England silversmith, and his family.

The Judge Samuel Holten House is the oldest house in the United States owned by a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The General Israel Putnam Chapter, NSDAR, has loyally maintained, preserved, and restored the house since 1921.

The historic house is open to the public during the months of June – October and also by appointment. Please visit the chapter website: www.GeneralIsraelPutnamChapter.org for more information regarding hours of operation, house tours, and the DAR in Danvers.

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THE JUDGE SAMUEL HOLTEN HOUSE



Circa 1670

171 Holten Street
Danvers, Massachusetts 01923

www.GeneralIsraelPutnamChapter.org

THE GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM CHAPTER,
Daughters of the American Revolution

Founded 1895

Incorporated 1921

The Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-profit, non-political, volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education.

Eligibility for Membership: Any woman, 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a patriot of the American Revolution is eligible.



The Judge Samuel Holten House has stood on a major corner in Danvers from early settlement through the Maritime Era, the Industrial Revolution, the 20th Century, and the present time. Situated on the western edge of the Salem Village National Historic District, the house has occupied significant players in both local and national events: One of its earliest occupants gave testimony against Rebecca Nurse, who in 1692 was hanged as a witch. The house was home to Revolutionary War patriot and statesman Samuel Holten.

Like many early New England houses, the Holten House evolved over the course of 350 years. The unique aspect of this house is the degree of intact building fabric that has survived the many generations of construction and alterations.

The first phase (**Phase I**) was a one-room, two-storey house with a half-storey lean-to or "keeping room" off to the western side. The clapboards were originally unpainted oak; eventually they were painted "Indian Red." There was a gable projecting off the main façade; the original leaded casement windows contained diamond and rectangular shaped glass.



Main Façade Phase I

The land on which the house stands was eventually inherited by Sarah Ingersoll (b.1627) through her parents, Richard Ingersoll (c.1587-1644) and Ann Langley (c.1590-1670), who emigrated from England to Salem in 1629. Sarah first married William Haynes of Newbury, Massachusetts. She married second in 1651 one of the earliest inhabitants of Salem Village, Joseph Holten, Sr. (c.1621-1705,) and moved back to Salem Village (now Danvers.) It is possible that the Holten House was built at this time, although they did not officially own the property or tract of land on which the house now stands until Ann's death in 1670. (Ann had married John Knight of Newbury, Massachusetts after Richard Ingersoll's death.)

The next owner of the tract of land on which the Holten House is situated was Joseph and Sarah's second- eldest son, Benjamin Holten, Sr. (1657-1689.) It is probable that Benjamin and his wife, Sarah, first built the house and were its first occupants. Benjamin's brothers, including his older brother, Joseph Holten, Sr., had their own homes on land that was part of the original Richard Ingersoll property.

It was this Sarah Holten who gave critical testimony during the witchcraft trials against her neighbor, Rebecca Nurse, who was eventually hanged at Salem in 1692. Sarah related in a deposition that in 1689 her husband was as well as she ever knew until one Saturday morning when Rebecca Nurse came to their house accusing the Holten's pigs of ruining her garden:

"Tho our piggs were sufficiently yoaked and their fence was down in severall places: yett all we could say to hir could no ways passifie hir; but she contineued Railing and scolding agrat while together calling to hir son Benj. Nurs to goe and git a gun and kill our piggs and lett non of them goe out of the field."

A short time after that morning and throughout the summer until his death of 17 September 1689, Sarah further testified that her husband often suffered seizures, stomach pains, and spells of blindness, the cause of which bewildered his doctor:
"...acting much like to our poor bewitched parsons...."

Sarah gave birth to their first and only child, Benjamin Holten, Jr., on 18 January 1689, several months after his father's untimely death. Sarah continued to occupy the house with her young son until her death. It was during the ownership of Benjamin Holten, Jr. and his wife, Lydia Gott, that the second floor to the "keeping room" (**Phase II**) was added.

The third campaign (**Phase III**) took place in the first half of the 18th century during Benjamin, Jr.'s and his son John's ownership. Like Henry Holten, who owned and operated "Holten's Hotel" near Prince and Garden Streets, they may have used the house as a tavern or "ordinary." Generally, only men of high standing were approved for licenses to operate taverns because they were trustworthy

to run "orderly" houses. A two-storey addition was built adjoining the "keeping room and chamber, and the attic gable was removed at this time. The finishes in these rooms, as in the earlier sections of the house, were kept in the first period style with exposed framing and whitewashed.



Main Façade (Phases I - III)

The house was sold in 1752 to John Holten's cousin, Samuel Holten, Sr., son of Henry Holten and grand-son of Joseph Holten, Sr. Thereafter, he relinquished the property to his son, Samuel Holten, Jr. The younger Samuel Holten and his wife, Mary Warner of Gloucester, Massachusetts, had three children: Lydia, Mary, and Sarah. A great deal of work (**Phases IV - VI**) was performed on the house during his ownership to accommodate the multiple generations of his family living in the house. These changes included adjustments to the main façade, construction of the lean-to at the rear of the house, addition of the corner chimney, and, possibly, the lean-to on the east façade known today as "the Judge's office." The seven-seat double privy with its pagoda roof and pineapple finial was built at this time and remains intact today with its original finishes.



Rear Façade



18th century Double Privy

Born in Danvers, Samuel Holten, Jr. (1738-1816) was an important man to his town and his country. He studied medicine under Dr. Jonathan Prince of Danvers and at age eighteen began his practice in Gloucester, Massachusetts where he met and married his wife in 1758. He shortly thereafter relocated his wife and medical practice back to Danvers. An incorporator of the Massachusetts Medical Society and an early founder of the temperance movement in Massachusetts, he was a well-respected physician, but gave up his practice at the onset of the American Revolution in order to dedicate himself to a life of public service.



His political career began in 1768 as delegate to a convention at Faneuil Hall in Boston. He served as one of the Massachusetts delegates to the Yorktown Convention which framed the Articles of Confederation. He served at different periods in Congress from 1778-1795 and, in the absence of Richard Henry Lee, served as President *pro tempore* of the Continental Congress. Holten was one of the judges for the Court of Common Pleas for Essex County, an office he held for more than three decades. He was Judge of probate for Essex County from 1796 until his death in 1816. Locally, he served Danvers as selectman, town clerk, assessor, and town treasurer while also serving in various capacities in his church.