"The Most Satisfactory Villain That Ever Was": Charles W. Upham and *The House of the Seven Gables*

JONATHAN A. COOK

READERS of Hawthorne's *The House of The Seven Gables* are inevitably repelled by the figure of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, whose barely concealed selfishness and greed are consonant with his characterization as an emblematic hypocrite. Although the Judge is a transparently villainous figure whose unexpected demise allows for the Pyncheon family curse to be lifted, the ironic representation of the Judge's appearance and behavior, and the virulence of the narrator's attack on his dead body for the length of a whole chapter, invite speculation that a possible personal agenda is at work in the novel. Those acquainted with Hawthorne's biography know that—following an idea first suggested by Hawthorne's sisters and confirmed by his son—the figure of the Judge is alleged to be a caricature of Charles W. Upham, the head of the Whig Party in Salem and the main instigator behind Hawthorne's firing from the Salem Custom House in June and July 1849. But no critic or biographer to date has demonstrated the full extent to which the biographical model may have shaped the characterization of the Judge or influenced the narrative as a whole.[1]

[1]Elizabeth Hawthorne wrote to her brother in Lenox, Massachusetts, on 3 May 1851: "Louisa says that Judge Pyncheon is supposed to be Mr. Upham. I do not know Mr. Upham, but I imagined him to be a much more insignificant person,—less weighty in every sense. There may be some points of resemblance, such as the warm smiles, and the incident of the daguerreotype bringing out the evil traits of his character, and his boasts of the great influence he had exerted for Clifford's release" (Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife,* 2 vols. [Boston: James R. Osgood,

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Hawthorne's correspondence at the time of his dismissal after more than three years in office gave ample reason to suspect a future act of literary revenge against his Whig enemies and, more particularly, the main individual behind his removal. Shortly before he was fired and when rumors had already reached him of his possible dismissal, Hawthorne wrote his friend and Bowdoin classmate Longfellow on 5 June 1849: "I must confess, it stirs up a little of the devil within me, to find myself hunted by these political bloodhounds. If they succeed in getting me out of office, I will surely immolate one or two of them." He would not, however, attack any "common political brawlers":

> But if there be among them (as there must be, if they succeed) some men who claim a higher position, and ought to know better, I may perhaps select a victim, and let fall one little drop of venom on his heart, that shall make him writhe before the grin of the multitude for a considerable time to come. This I will do, not as an act of individual vengeance, but in your behalf as well as mine, because he will have violated the sanctity of the priesthood to which we both, in our different degrees, belong.[2]

Two months later, after having left his position as surveyor and having long known who was the chief culprit behind his

1884], 1:438–39). Julian Hawthorne cryptically noted that his father got his revenge on Upham by making him "the leading character in a certain Romance of his. There he stands for all time,—subtle, smooth, cruel, unscrupulous; perfectly recognizable to all who knew his real character, but so modified as to outward guise that no one who had met him merely as an acquaintance would ever suspect his identity" (1:339–40). In an early biography of Hawthorne by the sometime transcendentalist and Unitarian man of letters Moncure D. Conway, the writer claimed that "there was nothing in Mr. Upham's career resembling anything in that of Judge Pyncheon. The Judge appears to me an unrealistic stage-villain, acting 'as it is written' in the legend" (*Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne* [New York: Scribner & Wellford, 1890], p. 134). For useful biographical, historical, and critical background on the novel, see Arlin Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), chaps. 18–19; James R. Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), pp. 309–71; Peter Buitenhuis, *"The House of the Seven Gables": Severing Family and Colonial Ties* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1991); Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Critical Essays on "The House of the Seven Gables"* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1995).

[2]Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Letters, 1843–1853,* ed. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson, vol. 16 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), pp. 269–70. Page citations to this edition will appear hereinafter as *Letters,* vol. 16.

dismissal, Hawthorne similarly told his Whig brother-in-law Horace Mann on 8 August that he wanted to take his case to the U.S. Senate to prove to the public that he was removed on "false or insufficient grounds. Then, if Mr Upham should give me occasion—or perhaps if he should not—I shall do my best to kill and scalp him in the public prints; and I think I shall succeed."[3]

Hawthorne's angry threats to "immolate," to place "a little drop of venom on his heart," and to "kill" and "scalp" the man (or men) responsible for his removal from his job leaves no doubt of his intention to seek some form of literary revenge for his firing. So when, in July or August 1850, he started writing his "romance" about historical and contemporary Salem, it was seemingly inevitable that Charles W. Upham would play the role of villain in the story. Yet the pervasiveness of Upham's presence in *The House of the Seven Gables* has never been properly traced, as both a model for Judge Pyncheon and a historical source for the plot of the novel. Examining the narrative for the historical evidence of Charles W. Upham's personality and his role in Hawthorne's firing demonstrates the instrumental part he played in providing much of the inspiration for Hawthorne's second novel and launching him on the most productive phase of his career as a writer.

The colonial ancestors of Charles Wentworth Upham (1802–75) had settled in Malden in the seventeenth century and

[3]*Letters,* 16:293. Hawthorne threatened to put a curse on those who would fail to honor his literary gifts and have him fired (or, as he later put it in the preface to *The Scarlet Letter,* "beheaded"), thus anticipating "wizard" Matthew Maule's curse against Colonel Pyncheon and the Pyncheon family for having him executed for witchcraft: "If they will not be grateful for its works of beauty and beneficence, then let them dread it as a pervasive and penetrating mischief, that can reach them at their firesides, and in their bedchambers, follow them to far countries, and make their very graves refuse to hide them. I have often thought that there must be a good deal of enjoyment in writing personal satire; but, never having felt the slightest ill-will toward any human being, I have hitherto been debarred from this peculiar source of pleasure" (*Letters,* 16:270).

Charles W. Upham, U.S. Congressman (1853–55), frontispiece, *Memoir of Charles Wentworth Upham* (1877), by George Edward Ellis.

spread elsewhere throughout eastern Massachusetts.[4] As the son of Joshua Upham, a Harvard-educated lawyer and loyalist who fled Boston during the Revolution and became a judge in St. John, New Brunswick, Charles W. Upham grew up in Canada; at the age of fourteen, he moved to Boston to work for a cousin. Showing talent and an interest in pursuing his education, Upham studied Latin with a local minister and in 1817

[4]The fullest account of Upham's life is in George E. Ellis, "Memoir of Charles Wentworth Upham," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings,* vol. 15 (Boston, 1876), pp. 182–220; see also Margaret B. Moore, *The Salem World of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 192–98.

he entered the Harvard class of 1821, where he was second in academic rank and a friend and classmate of Emerson's. Graduating from the Unitarian Harvard Divinity School in 1824, Upham was appointed junior pastor of Salem's First Church, where the Reverend John Prince presided; when Prince died in 1836, Upham became senior pastor. In March 1826, Upham married Ann S. Holmes, sister of Oliver Wendell Holmes, with whom he had fifteen children, four of whom survived into adulthood and only two of whom were alive at the time of his death. Upham began his writing career with two defenses of Unitarianism, *Principles of the Reformation* (1826) and *Letters on the Logos* (1828), but soon, like Hawthorne, he came to focus his scholarly attention on the history of colonial New England and the town of Salem. In 1829–30, Upham helped organize the Salem Lyceum.[5] There, in February and March 1831, he delivered two lectures on Salem witchcraft, which he reprised in neighboring towns and soon issued as a book. In 1833, Upham upheld Unitarianism against the theological attacks of orthodox Congregational minister George B. Cheever, Hawthorne's Bowdoin classmate, in the *Salem Gazette*.

In 1836 Upham invited Emerson to lecture at the Salem Lyceum, but following Emerson's *Divinity School Address* in 1838, Upham turned against his Harvard friend, maintaining, like other prominent Unitarians, that transcendentalism was a new form of infidelity. One of Emerson's young devotees, Jones Very, a poet and Greek tutor at Harvard, was intoxicated by Emerson's address that summer, and while visiting his native Salem in September 1838, he became convinced he had a prophetic mission to warn of Christ's Second Coming. On Sunday, 16 September, Very called at the homes of three Salem ministers to announce the momentous, impending event. The Baptist Lucius Bolles threw him out of his house; the Unitarian John Brazer, minister of Very's own North Church in Salem, told Very to perform a miracle or accept the fact that

[5]On Upham's involvement in founding the Salem Lyceum, see Alfred Rosa, *Salem, Transcendentalism, and Hawthorne* (Rutherford, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980), p. 37.

he was insane; and Charles W. Upham sternly threatened to have Very committed to an asylum. Scorned by the clergy, Very moved on to the home of his friend and sympathizer Elizabeth Peabody, who, as a friend of Emerson, took a more benign view of his acolyte's condition and tried to dissuade Upham from forcibly seeking Very's removal to an asylum. Considering Very an example of the baleful effects of Emersonian transcendentalism, Upham ignored Peabody's entreaties and forced himself into Very's mother's house to take the deluded young man to McLean Asylum in Charlestown, where he was kept for a month.[6]

The precise amount of contact between Hawthorne and Upham from the later 1820s to the late 1840s is not known, but there is ample evidence of acquaintanceship and even of mutual esteem until the disruptive events of 1849. Hawthorne first mentioned Upham's name while he was still in college at Bowdoin, teasingly reporting in a November 1824 letter to his aunt Mary Manning that his sister Elizabeth said Mary was in love with the newly installed Unitarian minister.[7] Upon his return home to Salem in 1826, Hawthorne would have heard about the new Unitarian minister with literary and historical interests, especially since the Hawthorne family held a pew in Upham's church—even though Hawthorne himself did not attend services there or at any other church. It is not known if Hawthorne was present at the lectures that went into Upham's *Lectures on Witchcraft* in 1831, but he read the volume when it was issued, in keeping with his own fascination with the subject and his family connection with the controversial events of 1692. In his story "Alice Doane's Appeal," first published

[6]See Rosa, *Salem, Transcendentalism*, pp. 99–103; Edwin Gittleman, *Jones Very: The Effective Years, 1833–1840* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), chap. 12. Upham's zealous intervention in Very's case is consonant with his view of the dangers of the imagination, which he identified as a key factor in the Salem witchcraft craze. See *Lectures on Witchcraft, Comprising a History of the Delusion in 1692* (Boston: Hendee and Babcock, 1831), pp. 274–75.

[7]Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Letters, 1813–1843*, ed. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson, vol. 15 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), p. 190. Hereinafter cited as *Letters*, vol. 15.

in the 1835 *Token,* Hawthorne paid high tribute to Upham's impressive researches into Salem witchcraft.[8] Hawthorne also apparently drew on some details found in Upham's volume on Salem witchcraft to write his story "Young Goodman Brown," published in 1835 in the *New-England Magazine,* and the two writers' shared interest in the moral history of their town and region created other potential grounds for mutual admiration and influence.[9]

In addition to *Lectures on Witchcraft,* Upham wrote a number of well-regarded theological, historical, and biographical works. In January 1838, Hawthorne told an autograph seeker that Upham's writings, including his recent *Life of Sir Henry Vane* (1835), dedicated to the fourth governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and written for Jared Sparks's Library of American Biography, had been "received with distinguished approbation here and in England. No collection of American autographs can be considered complete, without a specimen from him" (*Letters,* 15:260). Over the ensuing year he and Upham exchanged copies of their recent writings, Upham giving him his eulogy for his eleven-year-old son Edward, who had died on 1 July 1838, and Hawthorne later giving Upham an inscribed copy of the republished edition of "The Gentle Boy" illustrated by his future wife, Sophia Peabody.[10] Yet Hawthorne's admiration for Upham's researches into local and

[8] "Till a year or two since, this portion of our history has been very imperfectly written"; but recently "an historian has treated the subject in a manner that will keep his name alive, in the only desirable connection with the errors of our ancestry, by converting the hill of their disgrace into an honorable monument of his own antiquarian lore, and of that better wisdom, which draws the moral while it tells the tale" (*"The Snow Image" and Uncollected Stories,* ed. Roy Harvey Pearce et al., vol. 11 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974], p. 267).

[9] On Hawthorne's use of Upham's study of Salem witchcraft in "Young Goodman Brown," see Thomas Woodson, "Hawthorne, Upham, and *The Scarlet Letter,*" in *Critical Essays on Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter,"* ed. David B. Kesterson (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988), p. 187. On the friendly literary relations between Hawthorne and Upham before the late 1840s, see Susan Swartzlander, "'Amid Sunshine and Shadow': Charles Wentworth Upham and Nathaniel Hawthorne," *Studies in American Fiction* 15 (Fall 1987): 227–33.

[10] Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne,* p. 198; Swartzlander, "'Amid Sunshine and Shadow,'" p. 228.

regional history ultimately did not translate into a lasting friendship. Upham's successful threat in September 1838 to put Jones Very into an insane asylum doubtless struck Hawthorne as theological bullying toward this friend of the Peabody family, with whom he had recently become socially involved as friend to Elizabeth and suitor to Sophia. In the late fall of 1844, after having dined with Hawthorne and Emerson at the latter's house in Concord, Upham spread tales about the Hawthornes' poverty while living at the Old Manse, much to Hawthorne's annoyance, as he reported from Salem in a letter to his wife on 6 December 1844.[11] Upham's career at Salem's First Church ended in December 1844 when a persistent bronchial condition led to his resignation, after which he edited the Unitarian *Christian Register* from March 1845 until March 1846. Long a member of the Whig Party, Upham in 1848 began a political career that lasted for the next dozen years, first as head of the Salem Whigs and president of the Taylor Club in the same year that the party won national power with the election of Zachary Taylor to the presidency. Upham subsequently filled several prominent state and national political positions as member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives (1849–50), member of the Massachusetts Board of Education (August 1851–August 1852), mayor of Salem (1852), delegate to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention (1853), U.S. Congressman from the Sixth District of Massachusetts (March 1853–March 1855), president of the Massachusetts Senate (1857–1858), and member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives (1859–1860), after which he retired from politics and turned full time to letters.[12]

[11] "When he [Upham] returned from Concord, he told the most pitiable stories about our poverty and misery; so as almost to make it appear that we were suffering for food. Everybody that speaks to me seems tacitly to take it for granted that we are in a very desperate condition, and that a government office is the only alternative of the alms-house" (*Letters,* 16:70–71).

[12] As a political writer, Upham produced the campaign biography for the Republican candidate, *Life, Explorations, and Public Services of John Fremont,* in 1856, a counterpart to Hawthorne's own 1852 campaign biography of President (1853–57) Franklin Pierce. Following his retirement from politics, Upham expanded his research into the

In order to frame our discussion of the presence of Charles W. Upham in *The House of the Seven Gables,* we need to examine closely the circumstances of Hawthorne's firing, with the attendant loss of his $1,200 annual salary, from his position as surveyor at the Salem Custom House.[13] While Hawthorne first became concerned about losing his post in March 1849 with the inauguration that month of the new Whig president, he only received official notice of his dismissal on 8 June 1849. When it soon became clear that his removal was based on an attack on his integrity and not merely his political affiliation, Hawthorne began a campaign to be reinstated by appealing to his close Whig associates George Hillard and Horace Mann. Newspapers in Salem and Boston avidly debated Hawthorne's case. A letter to the editor appearing in the 11 June *Boston Post,* for example, decried the author's undeserved "decapitation" by President Taylor. On 16 June, the Whig *Boston Atlas* published an unsigned letter, likely written by Upham, asserting a series of trumped-up charges, including the allegations that Hawthorne had displaced a Whig when he came to office; that he had engaged in political activities such as marching in a Democratic torchlight parade, acting as a member of the Salem Democratic Town Committee, serving as a delegate to the state Democratic convention, and contributing political articles to the Democratic *Salem Advertiser;* and that he had paid the four Democratic customs inspectors under his supervision more than the four Whig inspectors.

history of the witchcraft delusion, and in 1867 his two-volume *Salem Witchcraft with an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects* was published to wide acclaim. In 1873, he completed vols. 2–4 of the *Life of Timothy Pickering,* devoted to the Salem-born Federalist (1745–1829) who was secretary of state under Washington and Adams and then a Massachusetts senator and congressman.

[13]See Winfield S. Nevins, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Removal from the Salem Custom House," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 53 (April 1917): 97–132; Hubert H. Hoeltje, "The Writing of *The Scarlet Letter,*" *New England Quarterly* 27 (September 1954): 326–46; Stephen Nissenbaum, "The Firing of Nathaniel Hawthorne," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 114 (April 1978): 57–86; Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne,* chap. 16; Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne,* 292–302.

In his reply to these charges in a letter to George Hillard on 18 June, which was published in the Whig *Boston Daily Advertiser* on 21 June and in the *Salem Gazette* two days later, Hawthorne noted that his appointment in March 1846 had not displaced a Whig but rather a so-called Tyler Democrat; that he had never marched in a parade or attended a Democratic town committee meeting, and he was not even aware of being chosen a member of the state Democratic convention; that his writing for the *Salem Advertiser* consisted only of a few literary articles; and last of all, that he had paid his inspectors as instructed by his superior in office, the Whig deputy collector (Ephraim Miller) who was now the collector (*Letters,* 16:279–82). Hawthorne's larger defense was based on his claim to be a nonpolitical Democrat who had been hired for his position based on respect for his literary merits, not his political actions; Hawthorne thus lent his party the prestige of his name rather than his services as a political operative. In the second half of June, a number of prominent Whigs—including George Ticknor, Rufus Choate, William Prescott, Edward Everett, and Daniel Webster—all supporting Hawthorne's effort to retain his position, petitioned Secretary William Meredith of the U.S. Treasury Department. On 25 June, a writer in the Whig *Salem Register* reported that any animosity expressed in Hawthorne's 18 June letter to Hillard was unwarranted, as Charles W. Upham, the head of the Salem Whigs, was at that very time seeking a government position for him elsewhere that would be equivalent to or even better than Hawthorne's current job as surveyor (*Letters,* 16:285–86).

By the end of June it looked like Hawthorne might be able to keep his position given the widespread campaign supporting him, but the situation changed dramatically in early July. As Hawthorne had known since at least 9 June, the major figure behind the accusations used as grounds for his removal was Charles W. Upham. To effectuate Hawthorne's dismissal, Upham made two trips to Washington in June and wrote three letters to the Treasury Department dated 25 and 29 June and 7 July (the 25 June letter was also signed by N. B. Mansfield, a local merchant, and Nathaniel Silsbee Jr.,

the mayor of Salem); and on 6 July, the Salem Whigs approved the submission of Upham's comprehensive "Memorial" to the Treasury summarizing the charges against Hawthorne, although Upham wrote it up only after the Whigs had met in caucus. This was the final outspoken response of Upham and the Salem Whigs to the recent national campaign to get Hawthorne reinstated. In addition to repeating old charges, the "Memorial" presented new evidence, likely gleaned from a recusant Democratic inspector, outlining the scheme whereby the four Whig inspectors under Hawthorne had been paid an average of $130 less than their four Democratic counterparts, who were then required to kick back half of this extra amount in order to defray party dues; they were also asked to pay a fee to subsidize the Democratic *Salem Advertiser*. When, in late 1847, two of the Democratic inspectors refused to pay the fee, they were temporarily suspended from office by an order signed by Hawthorne. Here, apparently, was the "smoking gun" of political malfeasance.[14]

Adding insult to injury, in his "Memorial" Upham included a backhanded effort to exonerate Hawthorne of corruption by making the author sound like a fool worthy of condescension as "the abused instrument of others":

> His entire ignorance, previous to his appointment, of matters of business, his inexperience of the stratagems of political managers, and the very slight interest which his thoughts could take in such things, have made him less conscious of the part he has performed, than almost any other man would have been. This we think from his known tastes and character; and it is the only theory upon which we can account for the temerity of the outcry raised by him and his friends at his removal—a liability to which all political office-holders are subject, and to which men of Mr. Hawthorne's true manliness of character have learned to submit with dignity and in silence.

Upham went on to note that instead of attempting to overrule the wishes of the Salem Whigs to have him removed, Hawthorne's personal and literary friends from outside Salem should be grateful that the author "is withdrawn and delivered

[14]Nevins, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Removal," pp. 117–18.

from influences and connections that made him officially responsible for acts most uncongenial with his nature, and unworthy of the reputation as one of the most amiable and elegant writers of America, which his fellow-citizens, of all parties, cherish and appreciate, and none more than the whigs of his native city."[15] The new details of apparent corruption were enough to tip the balance against Hawthorne, and the Treasury Department named his replacement on 24 July. Compounding Hawthorne's distress at this time was his mother's illness in the latter half of July, which culminated in her death at the end of the month, soon after his final dismissal.

In a futile attempt to exonerate himself from Upham's final charges, Hawthorne explained in an 8 August letter to Horace Mann that in the seemingly underhanded operation at the custom house highlighted by the Salem Whigs, he was merely following instructions from Washington; moreover, the letter suspending the two Democratic inspectors was never delivered because they paid their required assessments after being warned by someone else, without Hawthorne's knowledge. Hawthorne had, in fact, sought to spare the two inspectors any hardship because both had large families to support. He now suspected "an operation to squeeze an assessment out of the recusant inspectors" who would not pay the Democratic subscription (*Letters*, 16:292), but he denied any knowledge of it. Hawthorne was doubtless sincere in his denials of wrongdoing and political skullduggery; he was also deeply humiliated by an ordeal that ended in his dismissal after a chance of reinstatement had appeared only to quickly disappear. Overall, the experience had involved weeks of public exposure—including coverage of the controversy in the national press—and a final devastating and inherently insulting accusation of guilt, all of which radically undermined his stance as a largely apolitical man of letters dedicated to the sacred priesthood of art.[16]

[15]Nevins, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Removal," pp. 118–19.

[16]In their "Memorial," Upham and his Whig cohorts had in fact asserted that it was political maneuvering in the last days of the Polk administration to secure the Salem Custom House as a Democratic stronghold that ultimately required Hawthorne's

Hawthorne's bitterness against Upham's malice and hypocrisy—transforming him from scholarly Unitarian minister to blood-thirsty political inquisitor—stemmed from a number of causes, as we have seen. In addition, in a 12 June 1849 letter to his daughter Sophia, Hawthorne's father-in-law reported that he had met Upham in Boston at the State House and asked the clergyman-*cum*-politician whether "he thought Hawthorne would be turned out. He was quite cosey [i.e., "cozy," deeply reticent or noncommittal], and said he thought nothing would be done about it. In looking back upon the interview," Dr. Peabody noted, "I now have an impression revived that there was a sort of mystification in his manner." Urging Hawthorne to sue his detractors for libel, Dr. Peabody went on to comment sarcastically: "I should like to have Mr. Upham asked if he prays nowadays, and what sort of a prayer he made after he put his name to that document [containing the Whig charges against Hawthorne]. I should like to ask him if he ever heard of the Ninth Commandment [i.e., against bearing false witness]."[17] Writing his Whig friend George Hillard on 18 June, Hawthorne referred to "a gentleman now very prominent and active in our local politics, the Rev. Charles Wentworth Upham, who told me, in the presence of David Roberts, Esq., that I need never fear removal under a Whig administration, inasmuch as my appointment had not displaced a Whig" (*Letters*, 16:280).

On 10 June, Sophia wrote her father about the false charges that had been lodged against her husband which a Whig confidant (probably Hillard) had leaked to the Hawthornes after obtaining the information from a Salem Whig: "But what will

removal. Because the new Whig collector Ephraim Miller—a son of the previous collector who was friendly to the Democrats—accepted Polk's last-minute Democratic appointee for deputy collector while refusing to accept the new administration's replacement Whig candidate for this office or that of naval officer, the only other federally controlled office at the Salem Custom House, the surveyor had to be dismissed. The new president had previously said that there would be "no proscription" of Democratic officeholders unless they were incompetent or dishonest. Hawthorne's removal was thus a political necessity. See Nevins, "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Removal," pp. 111–15; Nissenbaum, "The Firing of Nathaniel Hawthorne," pp. 72–74; Turner, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, pp. 177–78, 184–86.

[17] Hawthorne, *Hawthorne and His Wife*, 1:337–38.

surprise you more than this fact is to hear who got up this paper & perjured his soul upon it—who followed his name with their signatures—& how it was endorsed. It was no less a person than Mr Charles W Upham!!! who has thus proved himself a liar and a most consummate hypocrite! for he always professed himself the warmest friend." She went on to transform the former clergyman's dishonesty into a capital crime: "Thus the 'murder' is out, through better members of the same party." On 17 June, Sophia informed her mother that the Salem-based "party of intriguers" who were bent on Hawthorne's removal were "covering themselves with the hopeless mud of Dante's Inferno" and incurring a guilt, like Lady Macbeth's, that couldn't be dissolved. On 21 June she wrote her mother again, announcing the suspension of her husband's dismissal following the national outcry, and on 27 June related that "it was confidently averred that either this same office would be restored to him—or a much better one offered." She also reported: "In a Salem Register there have been many abusive articles—& in the last one of Monday, Mr Upham fairly ensnares & exposes himself in the most witless manner—A knave is often a fool, you know, & he has proved the truth of the adage."[18]

On 4 July, when it still seemed that Hawthorne might retain his post, Sophia wrote her father: "We hear that the Reverend Charles Wentworth Upham, that valiant general of the Whig church militant as the papers call him, is cursing his stars for making such a blunder as to procure Mr. Hawthorne's removal." After indicating the small Whig clique masterminding the plot against her husband (including Richard S. Rogers, Nathaniel Silsbee Jr., and George Devereux, as well

[18] Most of Sophia's letters cited here appeared in part or in full in Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, *Memories of Hawthorne* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1897), pp. 93–101, but they betray a few inaccuracies of transcription and dating, and initials diplomatically replace names. For images of the relevant manuscript letters, see Sophia's correspondence in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, www.digitalcollections.nypl.org, letters to Dr. Nathaniel Peabody (father) of 8/9 June 1849 (image 5107208), 10 June 1849 (image 5107220), and 4 July 1849 (image 5076813); and letters to Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (mother) of 8 June 1849 (image 5107208), 17 and 21 June 1849 (image 5072875), 27 June 1849 (image 5072879), and an undated fragment from early July 1849 (image 5077338).

as Upham), she quoted the incredulous comment of another leading Massachusetts Whig: "'What!' said Charles Sumner, 'that smooth, smiling, oily man of GOD!'" Finally, in an undated letter to her mother from the second week of July, after the new charges had turned the administration against Hawthorne, Sophia demonstrated the "meanness and cunning" of the "Reverend priest" by revealing Upham's dishonesty in leaving out a phrase in a copy he made of an earlier document signed by Hawthorne supporting Ephraim Miller's appointment as collector, thereby trying to prove Hawthorne a "false witness." She then vented her indignation: "But there is no language to describe him. He is, my husband says, the most satisfactory villain that ever was, for at every point he is consummate. The government had decided to reinstate Mr. Hawthorne before Mr. Upham's arrival at Washington, and his representations changed the purpose."

Hawthorne's quasi-autobiographical "The Custom-House," which prefaces his novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), gives a few signs of his anger and outrage at being ejected from his job as surveyor, although he saves face by presenting the position as one that was compromising his integrity by weakening his moral fiber and stifling his literary creativity, as Upham and the Salem Whigs had claimed. The depth of Hawthorne's resentment is obliquely indicated in the early description of the federal eagle high above the entrance to the Salem Custom House, which has "no great tenderness, even in her best of moods, and, sooner or later,—oftener soon than late,—is apt to fling off her nestlings with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows." Toward the end of the sketch, after noting the election that brought the Whigs to national power in 1849, Hawthorne hints at the partisan animosity that led to his firing, followed by his failed efforts to be reinstated, when he notes how strange it was "to observe

the bloodthirstiness that is developed in the hour of triumph, and to be conscious that he is himself among its objects!"[19]

He goes on to claim that "this fierce and bitter spirit of malice and revenge has never distinguished the many triumphs of my own party as it now did that of the Whigs"; for the Democrats, according to Hawthorne, were less ruthless because, having won four out of six of the last presidential elections, "the long habit of victory has made them generous."[20] Hawthorne humorously refers to his firing as a political beheading, a contemporary metaphor for loss of federal office under the spoils system, also found in the Democrat John Barton Derby's 1835 *Political Reminiscences,* which savagely assailed the Boston Custom House in the 1830s.[21] But he does not give any indication of the individual (or individuals) responsible for his firing even as he satirically—and notoriously—skewers some of his fellow employees at the Salem Custom House. The novel that follows the sketch similarly contains a few revealing but strategically displaced details of Hawthorne's humiliating ordeal in the summer of 1849, including the initial public shaming of Hester Prynne on the scaffold and her subsequent secret acts of revenge through deliberate silence.[22]

Hawthorne began *The House of the Seven Gables* in the summer of 1850 after he had moved to Lenox, Massachusetts, in order to get away from his hated Salem; but the events of the previous year manifestly still rankled in his breast and provided a major impetus for the novel's composition. The most obvious connection between the figure of the villainous Judge Pyncheon and Charles W. Upham is the former's portrayal as a consummate hypocrite, whose smiling countenance disguises a conniving and malicious heart. (Charles W.

[19]Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter,* ed. William Charvat et al., vol. 1 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), pp. 5, 40.

[20]Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, p. 41.

[21]Moore, *Salem World*, p. 182.

[22]Nissenbaum, "The Firing of Nathaniel Hawthorne," pp. 57–60, 81–86; Leland S. Person Jr., "Hester's Revenge: The Power of Silence in *The Scarlet Letter,*" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43 (March 1989): 465–83; Woodson, "Hawthorne, Upham," pp. 183–93.

Upham was, of course, not a judge by profession; however, Upham's loyalist father had been one in Canada, and Upham himself acted in a quasi-judicial role as head of the political committee that presided over Hawthorne's condemnation and dismissal.) By the same token, Hepzibah Pyncheon's shame and self-consciousness about opening a cent shop, as described in chapters 2–4 of *The House of the Seven Gables,* likely reproduces Hawthorne's own equivalent emotions at having to reenter the poorly paid literary marketplace after his mortifying ejection from the Salem Custom House.

Following his ominous cameo appearance outside Hepzibah's cent shop in chapter 4, we formally meet the Judge in chapter 8 ("The Pyncheon of To-day") as an imposing figure whose simulated beneficence hides a lurking Bunyanesque diabolism. The narrator's description of the Judge's fleshy face and heavy-set body would seem to be based on a physical caricature of Upham's appearance, for the Judge is initially described as seeking to mask the "stern" look of his "dark, square countenance" with a false appearance of benevolence: "Owing, however, to a somewhat massive accumulation of animal substance about the lower region of the face, the look was perhaps unctuous, rather than spiritual, and had, so to speak, a kind of fleshly effulgence, not altogether so satisfactory as he doubtless intended it to be."[23] Hawthorne's friends, at least, would have likely recognized the caricature. Charles Sumner, as earlier noted, had called Upham a "smooth, smiling, oily man of GOD," whereas Longfellow described Upham in his journal on 26 March 1838 as a "fat, red, rowdy chap, with only a twinkle of talent in his eye, and no lambent light playing over the whole countenance, as truly refined and intellectual men generally have."[24]

[23]Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables,* ed. Fredson Bowers, Matthew J. Bruccoli, and L. Neal Smith, vol. 2 of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), p. 116. Page citations to this edition will hereinafter appear in the text.

[24]Quoted in Randall Stewart, ed., *The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 288. This harsh evaluation was excised from the poet's published journals. See Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, With Extracts from his Journals and Correspondence,* 3 vols. (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1886), 1:281–82. Longfellow passed the afternoon of 25 March 1838 at a Salem coffeehouse talking over literary matters with Hawthorne, whom he called a "man of genius"; his contrary evaluation of Upham stems from an encounter in the same setting.

Presenting himself as a visitor to Hepzibah's cent shop, the "portly" Judge carries a gold-headed cane as a sign of his wealth and wears a "white neckcloth of the utmost snowy purity" (p. 116), an indirect reminder that Charles W. Upham's first career was that of Unitarian minister; he also wears a smile that was "a good deal akin to the shine on his boots," each of which "must have cost him and his boot-black, respectively, a good deal of hard labor to bring out and preserve them" (p. 117). When the Judge greets his country relative Phoebe, a young woman he has never met, in the cent shop and she avoids his kiss, his mien quickly turns "cold, hard, immitigable, like a day-long brooding cloud" (p. 119). The Judge is there to inquire after Clifford Pyncheon, who has recently been released from his unjust thirty-year prison sentence for the alleged murder of his uncle Jaffrey, a sentence we later learn was engineered by the Judge to save himself from suspicion of robbing this same uncle. The Judge thus hypocritically tells Phoebe: "Many years ago, when we were boys and young men together, I had a great affection for him [Clifford], and still feel a tender interest in all his concerns. You say, Cousin Phoebe, he appears to be weak-minded. Heaven grant him at least enough of intellect to repent of his past sins!" (p. 125). So might Charles W. Upham have said of his political victim and former literary associate Nathaniel Hawthorne.

During the Judge's encounter with Phoebe, the narrator takes the opportunity to explore the ways in which the Judge, especially in his inordinate greed and "great animal developement" (p. 122), resembles his seventeenth-century forbear, the Puritan Colonel. These unappealing traits, which add to the portrait of the contemporary Judge's worldliness and materialism, also suggest his patriarchal weight and overweening masculine prerogatives; for after three or four years of marriage the Judge had helped to kill his wife with his excessive demands. As the

narrator mischievously remarks, a story was current that "the lady got her death-blow in the honey-moon, and never smiled again, because her husband compelled her to serve him with coffee, every morning, at his bedside, in token of fealty to her liege-lord and master" (p. 123). As earlier noted, Upham sired fifteen children with his wife, and according to Elizabeth Peabody's later recollection, upon Hawthorne's mentioning to Upham that he was engaged to Sophia Peabody, the clergyman reportedly encouraged him to "keep his wife in subjection."[25]

When he discovers that Phoebe doesn't know anything about Clifford's past, the Judge tells her: "Believe the best you can of this unfortunate person, and hope the best! It is a rule which christians should always follow, in their judgements of one another" (pp. 125–26). The Judge's mention of Christian ethics may again remind us of Charles W. Upham's ministerial career, while the instruction to believe and hope the best about an unfortunate person is ironic in the context of Upham's aggressive and prolonged attacks on Hawthorne's character in June and July 1849. In "a voice as deep as a thunder-growl, and with a frown as black as the cloud whence it issues" (p. 126), the Judge refuses to let Phoebe call for Hebzibah but instead enters the house until confronted by the forewarned spinster. Hepzibah is thus ready to defend her brother from the hated intruder, even though the latter claims he was there to make the hypersensitive Clifford more "comfortable" at his well-furnished country house (p. 127), a specious offer that brings to mind the government job that was falsely promised Hawthorne to placate him pending his final removal.

The Judge's real motive, of course, is to question Clifford about the secret disposition of relevant documents regarding funds supposedly missing from the estate he inherited from his uncle. As the Judge is confronted by Hepzibah's opposition and Clifford's feeble plea from another room that he not enter, his aspect once again takes on a diabolical cast: "a red fire kindled in his eyes; and he made a quick step forward, with something inexpressibly fierce and grim, darkening forth, as it were, out

[25] Moore, *Salem World*, p. 195.

of the whole man. To know Judge Pyncheon was to see him at that moment" (p. 129). This frightful demeanor "seemed not to express wrath or hatred, but a certain hot fellness of purpose, which annihilated everything but itself" (p. 129). After his momentary transformation, however, the Judge, "apparently conscious of having erred, in too energetically pressing his deeds of loving-kindness on persons unable to appreciate them" (pp. 129–30), reassumes his benign expression; and after claiming that Hepzibah and Clifford wrong him to think badly of him, he takes his leave.

The Judge's shockingly malign disposition, which lurks beneath a façade of beneficence, is a displaced reminder of Charles W. Upham's seeming bloodlust for Hawthorne's removal, while similarly evoking Upham's familiarity with the apparent satanic possession chronicled in his study of Salem witchcraft. The Judge's rank hypocrisy here is worthy of Upham's hypocritical benignity when claiming in his "Memorial" that Hawthorne, whatever his own desires in the matter, was ultimately better off delivered from the corrupt practices of the Salem Custom House and returned to his real job as "one of the most amiable and elegant writers of America." The narrator completes the portrait of Judge Pyncheon as consummate hypocrite by remarking that after he leaves Hepzibah's cent shop, he presents himself to the public with a false condescension, showing "a free and hearty manner towards those who knew him; putting off the more of his dignity, in due proportion to the humbleness of the man whom he saluted; and thereby proving a haughty consciousness of his advantages, as irrefragably as if he had marched forth, preceded by a troop of lackeys to clear the way" (p. 130).

Adding a final note of satire to the portrait, the narrator suggests that "so excessive was the warmth of Judge Pyncheon's kindly aspect" for the rest of the day that "an extra passage of the water-carts was found essential, in order to lay the dust occasioned by so much sunshine" (p. 130). Hawthorne's caricature of Charles W. Upham's public demeanor here was later confirmed by an equally wry description of Upham in October 1852, when he was mayor of Salem, as recorded by a

German-born homeopathic physician and resident, Dr. Ernst Bruno von de Gersdorff, in a letter to a friend in San Francisco: "there was never a Mayor more efficient and at the same time delighted with his office and *power;* everything and every man feels it; even the dust heaps in the street sneak away when he approaches. His style of meeting 'the people' is grand, majestic, condescending, cordial, dignified and popular at once. From my office in Washington street I see him daily or hourly, passing by from his residence to his seat of Government, the City Hall."[26]

Another attribute that points to Judge Pyncheon as a caricature of Charles W. Upham is the bronchial condition the two share. The ailment, which led to Upham's retirement from the ministry, is first mentioned in chapter 8, when Phoebe hears "a certain noise in Judge Pyncheon's throat—rather habitual with him, not altogether voluntary, yet indicative of nothing, unless it were a slight bronchial complaint, or, as some people hinted, an apoplectic symptom" (p. 124). As the narrator notes, when Phoebe "heard this queer and aukward ingurgitation, (which the writer never did hear, and therefore cannot describe,) she, very foolishly, started, and clasped her hands" (p. 124) in surprise and distress. The narrator's gratuitous insistence that he is ignorant of the sound he goes on to describe is a feint intended to reveal, not conceal, the author's firsthand familiarity with the sound of Upham's respiratory ailment. Judge Pyncheon's strangely gurgling chest sounds are inherited from his ancestor Colonel Pyncheon, who had died of "apoplexy" (defined in the nineteenth century as an effusion of blood from any organ, not just the brain, as in a stroke), which fulfilled the lethal curse of Matthew Maule—a curse that would again be fulfilled in the Judge's final visit to the Pyncheon house to find Clifford.

A few weeks after his first visit and after Phoebe had gone home to visit her mother, Judge Pyncheon comes back to talk to Clifford again. Once more we are reminded of the former's

[26]"Letters Written by Dr. Ernest Bruno von de Gersdorff to Hon. Stephen Palfrey Webb, 1849–1855," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 79 (April 1943): 143. We do not know whether the writer's comments reflected his familiarity with Upham's role in Hawthorne's recent novel; they would more likely seem to be coincidental.

Upham-like bronchial condition when Hepzibah hears a "characteristic sound" at the door that is "neither a cough nor a hem, but a kind of rumbling and reverberating spasm in somebody's capacious depth of chest" (p. 225). On this occasion, too, Hepzibah is reluctant to let the Judge see Clifford, but after he explains the reason for his visit (the supposed missing wealth from the uncle's estate) and threatens to have Clifford taken away to an insane asylum because of his eccentric behavior, she agrees to go look for her brother while the Judge seats himself in the ancestral Pyncheon chair to wait. The Judge, of course, will suffer a lethal onset of "apoplexy" in chapter 18 while sitting in that chair waiting for Clifford, and the last we hear of his peculiar throat condition, which is now associated with an incipient stroke, is when the narrator, surveying the Judge's corpse and pondering the many appointments he has failed to keep, alludes to his overdue need "to consult the family-physician. About what, for Heaven's sake? Why, it is rather difficult to describe the symptoms. A mere dimness of sight and dizziness of brain, was it?—or a disagreeable choking, or stifling, or gurgling, or bubbling, in the region of the thorax, as the anatomists say?" (p. 272).

Other incidental aspects of the portrait of Judge Pyncheon in chapter 15 also bring Upham to mind. The Judge tells Hepzibah that he has had Clifford's "deportment and habits constantly and carefully overlooked [i.e., monitored]" (p. 236) and is alarmed by his cousin's eccentric behavior. If Clifford refuses to talk to him about Uncle Jaffrey Pyncheon's allegedly missing property, he intimates, he will bring about his cousin's "confinement, probably for the remainder of his life, in a public asylum for persons in his unfortunate state of mind" (p. 236). This is a threat that Charles W. Upham had made to Jones Very when the latter was in the grips of his messianic delusion in September 1838 and Upham had forced himself into the Very house to make sure that the deranged poet and transcendentalist was seized and confined in the McLean Asylum. Earlier in the novel (chapter 11), when the emotionally unstable Clifford attempts to join a passing political procession by throwing himself from the house's balcony, he has to be forcibly restrained from doing

so—evidence that Judge Pyncheon now uses against his cousin's mental health. The incident suggests a parody of Hawthorne's own controverted abstention from political activities, including a torchlight parade, while employed in the Salem Custom House. In chapter 15 Judge Pyncheon complains to Hepzibah about her unwavering prejudice against him in a manner that once again betrays his duplicity: "[I]s it possible that you do not perceive how unjust, how unkind, how unchristian, is this constant, this long-continued bitterness against me, for a part which I was constrained by duty and conscience, by the force of the law, and at my own peril, to act?" (p. 227). Pretending to rejoice at Clifford's release from prison, the Judge claims to have "shed so many tears for Clifford's calamity!" (p. 227). In response to what she knows to be his blatant hypocrisy, Hepzibah makes a passionate riposte: "[I]n God's name, whom you insult—and whose power I could almost question, since He hears you utter so many false words, without palsying your tongue—give over, I beseech you, this loathsome pretence of affection for your victim! You hate him!" (p. 228). So might the author of the novel have said to Charles W. Upham, who resorted to unctuous assertions of admiration and sympathy for Hawthorne in his "Memorial." Noteworthy, too, is the Judge's complaint of Hepzibah's "unchristian" prejudice and her charge that his hypocrisy is an "insult" to God, an exchange that recalls Dr. Peabody's description of his encounter with Upham in Boston in June 1849, as described above.

The narrator's ensuing depiction of the "evil and unsightly thing" (p. 229) that may underlie the elaborate structure of a distinguished man's reputation hints at the ugly truth beneath the Judge's protestations of benign intent. Thus strong-minded men like the Judge, who show "great force of character, and a hard texture of the sensibilities" (p. 229), are naturally endowed to accumulate substantial wealth as well as "offices of trust and emolument, and public honors" (p. 229). But beneath the "tall and stately edifice," or grand marble palace, of the public persona is "a corpse, half-decayed, and still decaying, and diffusing its death-scent all through the palace!" (p. 230). Within the frame of the story, the corpse imagery is a timely

reminder that the executed body of Matthew Maule, figuratively speaking, lies under the foundation of the seven-gabled house, a crime now repeated in the Judge's half-extinguished victim Clifford, who has been "buried" in prison for half his life and is now finishing it out in the sepulchral gloom of the very same house. For today's reader, the extended metaphor has multiple applications, either as a figure for Puritan original sin, or a paradigm of the Freudian subconscious, or a Veblenesque image of the souls of plutocrats and robber barons, with their histories of "buried" business rivals. But within the biographical framework we have been referencing, the half-decaying corpse lying under Judge Pyncheon's public reputation is the body of the "beheaded" surveyor of the port of Salem, victim of a very public condemnation and execution presided over by the head of an eminently respectable Whig Party.

The ensuing roster of the Judge's manifold accomplishments highlights "his devotedness to his party, and the rigid consistency with which he had adhered to its principles, or, at all events, kept pace with its organized movements" (p. 230). So might it be said of Charles W. Upham. Yet the long list of exemplary virtues associated with the Judge's reputation—his "purity" of judicial character, his "faithfulness" to public service, his "devotedness" to political party, his "remarkable zeal" as president of a Bible society, his "unimpeachable integrity" as treasurer of a charity, his "benefits" to horticulture, his "cleanliness" of moral behavior, the "snowy whiteness" of his linen, the "studied propriety" of his appearance, the "scrupulousness" of his public greetings, and finally the "smile of broad benevolence" (pp. 230–31)—ultimately assume, in their very excess of outward distinction, the likeness of the classic hypocrite, as famously denounced by Christ: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27). In the end, perhaps the most telling charge that could be leveled against Charles W. Upham as an ordained minister was this very condemnation of hypocrisy coming from the founder

of Christianity, which Hawthorne covertly marshals against his ruthless political persecutor and executioner.[27]

Serving as the great rhetorical and visual set piece of the novel, the narrator's extraordinary attack on the sedentary corpse of Judge Pyncheon in chapter 18 combines Hawthorne's revenge against his political enemy with the ancestral Maule animus against the usurping Pyncheon dynasty.[28] In the scene, Hawthorne succeeds in "killing" Upham in the person of the Judge at the start of the chapter and then "scalping" him in the ensuing rhetorical attack on the inert body—the punishment Hawthorne promised for Upham in his 8 August 1849 letter to Horace Mann. The narrator's dominant rhetorical strategy in chapter 18 is to pretend that the body of the Judge is only sleeping and that he must soon awaken to attend to the press of business he is neglecting: "And yet the Judge cannot be asleep. His eyes are open! A veteran politician, such as he, would never fall asleep with wide-open eyes; lest some enemy or mischief-maker, taking him thus at unawares, should peep through these windows into his consciousness, and make strange discoveries among the reminiscences, projects, hopes, apprehensions, weaknesses, and strong points, which he has heretofore shared with nobody" (p. 269). The narrator's blatantly ironic refusal

[27]On the various implicit biblical indictments of Judge Pyncheon in the novel, see Buitenhuis, *"The House of the Seven Gables": Severing Ties*, pp. 64–66. On the novel's general theme of hypocrisy and its sources in Puritan culture, see Kenneth Marc Harris, *Hypocrisy and Self-Deception in Hawthorne's Fiction* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), chap. 5.

[28]On the symbolic drama of revenge as symptomatic of the novel's destabilization of the form of romance, see Peter J. Bellis, *Writing Revolution: Aesthetics and Politics in Hawthorne, Whitman, and Thoreau* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), pp. 38–50. On the depiction of the dead Judge in relation to the new visual form of the daguerreotype, which Holgrave practices as a profession, see Marcy J. Dinius, *The Camera and the Press: American Visual and Print Culture in the Age of the Daguerreotype* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 51–67. For background on the interplay of painting and daguerreotypy in the novel generally, see Susan S. Williams, *Confounding Images: Photography and Portraiture in Antebellum American Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), chap. 4.

to acknowledge the Judge's true condition is compounded by the fact that it is the narrator himself who is the "enemy" and "mischief-maker" peering into the Judge's consciousness throughout the chapter; moreover, behind the narrator stands the author, Nathaniel Hawthorne, giving a lesson to a "veteran politician" like Charles W. Upham on exposing buried secrets to the world. The Judge's political ties are also mentioned in a reference to his party's request for a large contribution to help fund a coming election in the fall: "The Judge is a patriot; the fate of the country is staked on the November election; and besides, as will be shadowed forth in another paragraph, he has no trifling stake of his own, in the same great game. He will do what the committee asks" (p. 272). If the election here refers to the one approaching in the fall of 1848, as the time frame of the novel would imply, then this would be the election that brought Zachary Taylor to the presidency and the one in which Charles W. Upham, as leader of the Salem Whigs, would be empowered to decide on political spoils and other details of officeholding.

Among the important appointments the slumbering Judge is missing is a political dinner that promises a delicious spread of food and wine as well as the opportunity to seek a nomination for governor.[29] Charles W. Upham was too new to state politics in 1848 to think of running for governor, but the novel's characterization of Judge Pyncheon's Whig colleagues accords with Hawthorne's own experiences of his political adversaries: "They are practiced politicians, every man of them, and skilled to adjust those preliminary measures, which steal from the people, without its knowledge, the power of choosing its own rulers. The popular voice, at the next gubernatorial election, though

[29]George N. Briggs (1796–1861) served seven one-year terms as Whig governor of Massachusetts between 1844 and 1851. Bellis (*Writing Revolution*, pp. 43–44) argues that another topical political reference in the portrait—the narrator's assertion that the Judge's failure to appear at his political dinner would imply that "the Free Soilers have him" (p. 275)—alludes to a realignment of Massachusetts political parties in late 1850 and early 1851, marking this as the likely time frame of the novel. But the Free Soil Party, created in early August 1848, was already fielding candidates for the fall election that year and seated two senators and fourteen representatives in the Thirty-first Congress (March 1849–March 1851).

loud as thunder, will be really but an echo of what these gentlemen shall speak, under their breath, at your friend's festive board" (p. 274). One of the charges brought against Hawthorne in June 1849 was that he had played a political role for his party by serving as a delegate at the State Democratic Convention in Worcester in August 1848, a charge of which he was completely innocent; here Hawthorne is now retaliating by hinting a very real denial of democracy within the paternalistic Whig machine.

The narrator's insistence that the Judge get out of his chair, attend his political dinner, and help decide on the party's choice for governor includes the claim that "ambition is a talisman more powerful than witchcraft" (p. 274), a statement that, along with the other supernatural atmospherics of the chapter, is appropriate for Charles W. Upham's extensive scholarly knowledge of witchcraft, as attested by his 1831 lectures and book on the Salem delusion. Significantly, the latter part of chapter 18 of the novel describes the coming of nightfall and the advent of supernatural agents in the house, which is seemingly "haunted with the strangest noises" (p. 277). Yet the narrator notes that a man of "sturdy understanding" like the Judge—or Charles W. Upham—does not make a distinction between the witching hour of midnight and the familiar world of noon. The contrast between the world of the Salem witchcraft craze and the present is thus graphically presented by the narrator: "The Pyncheon of two centuries ago, in common with most of his contemporaries, professed his full belief in spiritual ministrations, although reckoning them chiefly of a malignant character. The Pyncheon of to-night, who sits in yonder chair, believes in no such nonsense" (p. 278). Upham's *Lectures on Witchcraft*, which detailed the fearful superstitions of the era that culminated in the execution of nineteen alleged witches in Salem in 1692, concluded that the delusion was fueled by "the sway of credulous fancies."[30] In the narrator's ironic reversal, the haunted ambiance of the house surrounding the Judge's corpse seems to become more vivid, despite the narrator's persistent

[30] Upham, *Lectures on Witchcraft*, p. 272.

denigration of belief in such outdated superstitions. Eventually a mortal procession of Pyncheon ancestors appears, starting with the Colonel who built the house and ending in the ghostly image of the Judge himself; the procession also includes "the Judge's only surviving child" (p. 280), who reportedly died while traveling abroad, an event that makes Clifford, Hepzibah, and Phoebe the Judge's heirs while also obliquely evoking the 1838 death of Charles W. Upham's young son Edward, whose eulogy Upham had sent to Hawthorne.[31] As the chapter draws to a close, a mouse is poised to run up the Judge's leg, while a cat that might be the Devil "watching for a human soul!" (p. 281) looks on. We are thus left with the impression that the Judge is facing imminent damnation for his failure to rise up and purge himself of his manifold sins.

Hawthorne's final act of literary revenge on Charles W. Upham comes in the last chapter of the novel ("The Departure"), which explains the true circumstances of the death of Uncle Jaffrey Pyncheon for which Clifford was blamed—a story loosely based on the famous April 1830 murder of Captain Joseph White. Here we learn that, thanks to Holgrave's researches, which are humorously attributed to a mesmerist medium (likely himself), the Judge is implicated in his uncle's death three decades earlier because he had been on the premises, ransacking his uncle's desk in the room next to the bedchamber where he had died. While rearranging the details of the nationally famous "Salem Murder" case, Hawthorne implicitly associates Judge Pyncheon with the well-born but dissolute Richard (Dick) Crowninshield, who murdered the wealthy White at the behest of White's two grandnephews, Frank and

[31] The twenty-one-year-old son of Charles W. Upham, Charles W. Upham Jr., was very much alive when, with his uncle Oliver Wendell Holmes, he visited the Hawthorne house in Lenox on the Stockbridge Bowl in August 1851 a few months after the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*. As Sophia reported in a 19 August letter to her mother, Holmes and his nephew Charles had that day dropped by for a short visit. Hawthorne apparently held Holmes's horse so that the doctor and his nephew could both admire the view from the window of the Hawthornes' "boudoir." After Holmes returned to retrieve his horse, he made a joke about the famous author of *The Scarlet Letter* performing so humble a task as holding his horse like a groom. See Lathrop, *Memories of Hawthorne*, p. 162; the full letter is available at www.digitalcollections.nypl.org, image 5073073.

Joe Knapp, the latter of whom had broken into his great-uncle's "treasure chest" three months before the murder and then, four days before the crime, destroyed what he thought was his will, assuming that if White died intestate, the Knapps would be major inheritors of his sizeable fortune.[32]

In Hawthorne's novel, young Jaffrey Pyncheon is the dissolute scion of a famous Salem family who escaped his crime of attempting to rob his uncle by pinning the charge of murder on his cousin Clifford, who lived in his uncle's house and so became implicated in his uncle's seemingly unnatural death from a fractured skull. "So craftily had he arranged the circumstances, that, at Clifford's trial, his cousin hardly found it necessary to swear to anything false, but only to withhold the one decisive explanation, by refraining to state what he had himself done and witnessed" (p. 312). Such a strategic transfer of guilt of attempted robbery and murder might have been suggested by the convoluted testimony and evidence presented at the White murder trials, but it also might apply to Hawthorne's view of the way in which Charles W. Upham had doctored the record of his surveyorship to effect his ouster in an act Sophia Hawthorne had denominated an act of "murder" and Hawthorne facetiously referred to as his "beheading." Upham's

[32] Eighty-two-year-old Joseph White, a former ship's captain, was killed in his bed on the evening of 6 April 1830 by a blow to the head and repeated stab wounds inflicted by Dick Crowninshield. After Crowninshield killed himself in jail on 15 June, an act committed with the intention of obviating the legal prosecution of his accomplices, Stephen White hired Daniel Webster to ensure their conviction. Frank Knapp was accordingly tried, convicted, and hung after two trials that August, while Joe Knapp was tried and convicted in November and hung at the end of December. Another potential conspirator, George Crowninshield, escaped conviction by means of the testimony of the madam at the Salem brothel where he had spent the night of the murder and the alleged untrustworthiness of a chief witness against him. For a complete account of the crime and ensuing events, see Robert Booth, *Death of an Empire: The Rise and Murderous Fall of Salem, America's Richest City* (New York: St. Martin's, 2011), chaps. 12–17. Hawthorne commented on the guilt of the Knapp brothers, whom he knew well, in a September 1830 letter to his cousin John Dike; see *Letters*, 15:207–8. In Hawthorne's novel, the events of the White murder are rearranged so that Joe Knapp's opening of his great-uncle's "treasure chest" becomes young Jaffrey Pyncheon's riffling of his uncle's papers, destroying a recent will favoring Clifford and leaving an older one favoring himself; while Joseph White's murder by a blow to the head and repeated stabbings becomes Uncle Jaffrey's accidental death by apoplexy and a blow to the temple as he fell.

"Memorial" against Hawthorne thus stood as a record of how historical facts had been reinterpreted to find the author guilty of misconduct while simultaneously exculpating him through the attribution of political naïveté, a damning double indictment in which Upham sunk his individual responsibility in the collective voice of the Salem Whigs.

Now that we have examined the many connections between *The House of the Seven Gables* and the figure of Charles W. Upham, we need to raise one other important issue regarding Hawthorne's use of this historical personage in his novel. For not only did Upham's act of firing Hawthorne from his custom house job help Hawthorne conceive of his story's chief villain, but Upham's writings on Salem witchcraft also helped the author formulate the plot of his new romance. Upham's *Lectures on Witchcraft: Comprising a History of the Delusion in Salem in 1692* consists of a careful review of the chief events of the witchcraft craze in Salem and its vicinity, followed by an analysis of the larger European history of the persecution of witches that demonstrates that the events in Salem were not unusual for their time. In his first lecture, Upham had noted the final confrontation between the Reverend Nicholas Noyes (1647–1717), Salem's presiding minister at the trials, and the accused witch Sarah Good (1655–92). The destitute, mentally unbalanced Good was an object of charity in Salem, often cursing those who refused her requests for aid; she had been accused by Tituba as well as her own four-year-old daughter, while her husband William was also a witness against her. In the scene of Noyes's final accusation prior to her execution by hanging on 19 July 1692, Upham wrote:

Mr Noyes urged her very strenuously, at the time of her execution, to confess. Among other things he told her, "She was a witch, and that she knew she was a witch." She was conscious of her innocence, and felt that she was injured, oppressed and trampled upon, and her indignation was aroused against her persecutors. She could not bear in silence the cruel aspersion, and although she was just about to be launched into eternity, the torrent of her feelings could not be restrained, but burst upon the head of him who uttered the false accusation. "You are a liar," said she. "I am no more a witch, than

you are a wizard;—and if you take away my life, God will give you blood to drink."[33]

In the confrontation between Sarah Good and the Reverend Nicholas Noyes described above can be found the source for the key dramatic tableau of Matthew Maule's threat of revenge against Colonel Pyncheon in the first chapter of *The House of the Seven Gables*. Moreover, Upham's account contains another key element of Hawthorne's plot: "[Thomas] Hutchinson says [in *The History of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay*] that in his day there was a tradition among the people of Salem, and it has descended to the present time, that the manner of Mr. Noyes' death strangely verified the prediction thus wrung from the incensed spirit of the dying old woman." Indeed, on 13 December 1717, Noyes expired in a manner apparently fulfilling Sarah Good's prophecy when he suffered an apoplectic hemorrhage and choked on his own blood.[34] Hawthorne would have known the story from Hutchinson, one of his favorite sources on New England history; but Upham's retelling of it, as well as the link that the former clergyman's bronchial complaint provides between the original historical curse on Noyes and the fictional curse on the Pyncheons, adds to the pervasive constellation of influences that converge in Hawthorne's supremely crafted act of literary revenge.

In his *Lectures on Witchcraft*, Upham noted various conflicts in the Salem community that helped catalyze the witchcraft

[33]Upham, *Lectures on Witchcraft*, p. 100. Sarah Good's threat of divine retribution by drinking blood has biblical sanction, being based on Revelation 16:4–6.

[34]Upham, *Lectures on Witchcraft*, pp. 100–101. As Upham also noted, Noyes had later shown contempt for eight more accused witches, saying of the suspended bodies: "What a sad thing it is to see eight firebrands of hell hanging there!!" (*Lectures on Witchcraft*, p. 95). In time, Noyes repented of his 1692 actions and continued on as a respected member of the Salem community. Upham's source for the scene of Sarah Good's execution was Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (1700). Hutchinson briefly described Noyes's death in a footnote to the second volume of his comprehensive history of colonial Massachusetts: "They have a tradition among the people of Salem that a peculiar circumstance attended the death of this gentleman, he having been choaked with blood, which makes them suppose her [Sarah Good], if not a witch, a Pythonissa [i.e., an oracle], at least in this instance" (*The History of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay: From the Charter of King William and Queen Mary in 1691, Until the Year 1750* [Boston, 1767], p. 55).

crisis in the summer of 1692: "Theological bitterness, personal animosities, local controversies, private feuds, long cherished grudges, and professional jealousies, rushed forward, and raised their discordant voices, to swell the horrible din." Such conflicts characterize the lethal dispute between Colonel Pyncheon and Matthew Maule in Hawthorne's novel while also providing a later-day reminder of Charles W. Upham's own ruthless behavior toward his fellow Salemite. Upham went on to urge the metaphysician and moralist "to scrutinize this transaction thoroughly in all its periods and branches, to ascertain its causes and to mark its developments. There cannot be a doubt that much valuable instruction would thus be gathered respecting the elements of our nature, and of society." Upham might have added "novelist" to his list of those who would benefit from scrutinizing the traumatic events of 1692 in Salem, for in composing his second romance, Hawthorne likely obtained "valuable instruction" from Upham's history even as he included Upham as a model for one of its main characters.[35]

In his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne had written: "The personages of the Tale—though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the Author's own making, or, at all events, of his own mixing; their virtues can shed no lustre, nor their defects redound, in the remotest degree, to the discredit of the venerable town of which they profess to be inhabitants" (p. 3). Hawthorne's disclaimer was likely a strategic attempt

[35]Upham, *Lectures on Witchcraft*, pp. 116–17. In an astute overview of Hawthorne's use of sources on Salem and colonial history in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Allan Emery notes that "Upham was not for Hawthorne merely an evil man or a personal foe but the nineteenth-century reincarnation of seventeenth-century iniquity, the perfect illustration of the persistence in Salem of 'Puritan' avarice and hard-heartedness." Moreover, "in this novel Hawthorne amply revenged himself on his enemy by accusing Upham of perpetuating—with his self-promoting political schemes and vindictive behavior toward his Democratic opponents—the very Puritan sins he had condemned in his *Lectures*" ("Salem History and *The House of the Seven Gables*," in *Critical Essays on "The House of the Seven Gables,"* ed. Rosenthal, p. 144).

to avoid the personal difficulties that would result from readers' attempts to locate contemporary Salemites in the novel's characters, especially its chief villain. Hawthorne was therefore careful not to make his caricature of Upham too explicit; indeed, he had already been harshly criticized for the derogatory portrait of some of his fellow custom house employees in the preface to *The Scarlet Letter*. With his great wealth and social conservatism, Judge Pyncheon was accordingly meant to embody not just a personal caricature of a leading Salemite but also the traits of a representative Massachusetts Whig—an exemplary member of the party of ascendant capitalism and traditional social hierarchy.[36]

From the foregoing discussion, we can better appreciate the artistry with which Hawthorne performed his covert act of literary revenge. In his "Custom House" sketch, Hawthorne had noted that an "ejected officer" like himself may be "fortunate in the unkindly shove that sends him forth betimes, to struggle amid a struggling world"; for "what presents itself to him as the worst event may very probably be the best."[37] The paradoxical language here, inadvertently evoking the theological idea of the "fortunate fall"—an idea that would inform much of Hawthorne's fiction, notably *The Marble Faun*—suggests that in his malicious political act of removing Hawthorne from the Salem Custom House, Charles W. Upham and his Whig associates had ironically saved him by releasing his literary creativity, catalyzing the composition of his second full-length novel, and stimulating his relatively late flowering as a novelist. In his new home in the Berkshires, Hawthorne had attained enough critical distance from the Salem events of June and July 1849 to frame a thematically rich and engaging story around them; he had also retained sufficient anger to make good on his promise of literary revenge. Brilliantly accomplishing both tasks, he enjoyed a prolonged popular and critical success that might otherwise have remained elusive.

[36]As Bellis notes, "In a sense, the Judge stands as an embodiment of the interlocking political, social, and economic elites that dominated antebellum Massachusetts" (*Writing Revolution*, p. 43). On the political identity of the Whig Party, see Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). Other historical figures who have been identified as contributing to the portrait of Judge Pyncheon are Nicholas Biddle (1786–1844), champion of the Second Bank of the United States (Sarah I. Davis, "The Bank and the Old Pyncheon Family," *Studies in the Novel* 16 [Summer 1984]: 150–65), and Massachusetts-born federal Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story (1779–1845) (Brook Thomas, *Cross-Examinations of Law and Literature: Cooper, Hawthorne, Stowe, and Melville* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987], chap. 2). Both these figures had been dead for several years by the time Hawthorne wrote *The House of the Seven Gables* and were not personally known to him. More persuasive is Mellow's suggestion (*Nathaniel Hawthorne*, p. 361) of Salem Whig Nathaniel Silsbee Sr. (1773–1850), who died in July 1850, just as Hawthorne began writing *The House of the Seven Gables*. Silsbee was a friend of Daniel Webster's, with whom he was fêted a few years earlier at a lavish Whig dinner in a specially built pavilion opposite the Silsbee mansion. Silsbee's daughter Maria had conned Hawthorne into challenging his future close friend John L. O'Sullivan to a duel in 1837–38 (Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, pp. 102–7), and his son Nathaniel Jr., a prominent local Whig and mayor of Salem in 1849–51, had been part of the small group led by Upham that removed Hawthorne from office.

[37]Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, pp. 38, 40. Hawthorne himself noted the same paradox in a revealing letter of 17 June 1850 to his former Democratic friend turned Whig opponent Horace Connolly, whom he now forgives for his ejection. See *Letters*, 16:344–46.

Jonathan A. Cook *is head of the English Department at Middleburg Academy and is author of* INSCRUTABLE MALICE: THEODICY, ESCHATOLOGY, AND THE BIBLICAL SOURCES OF MOBY-DICK, *as well as of numerous articles on the writings of Melville, Hawthorne, Poe, Irving, and other nineteenth-century American writers. He can be reached at jcookinscrutable@gmail.com.*