

Bewitched in Salem

Over the years, the Hawthorne Hotel has hosted many well-known personalities, including newsman Walter Cronkite, actress Bette Davis, General Colin Powell, and on separate occasions, President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush.

In 1984, Vanessa Redgrave called the hotel home for a month while making *Three Sovereigns for Sarah*, a public television movie about the Salem witch trials.

But it was the television sitcom *Bewitched* that brought the Hawthorne Hotel the most notoriety. In 1970, Elizabeth Montgomery, her real-life husband Bill Asher, and the rest of the cast and crew of the show stayed at the hotel for several weeks while filming episodes in Salem and surrounding communities.

For years after the two episodes aired as the *Salem Saga*, the hotel desk fielded telephone calls asking if this was the Hawthorne Hotel that was seen on *Bewitched*.



Marine Society

On the rooftop of the Hawthorne Hotel stands an exact replica of a cabin from the *Taria Topan*, one of the last vessels to ply the lucrative East India trade. This unique structure is the headquarters of the Salem Marine Society which has met on this site, almost uninterrupted, since 1830. The cabin is not open to the public. The Salem Marine Society was organized by captains and shipowners in 1776 to share navigation information and to provide benefits for needy members and their families. It is the oldest charitable organization in Salem.



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Hawthorne Hotel



The History of Salem's Hotel

The History of the Hawthorne Hotel



Fundraising For a New Hotel

In just a single week in July 1923, a corps of 230 volunteer businessmen recruited by the Salem Rotary Club and the Salem Chamber of Commerce sold more than half a million dollars worth of stock in a proposed “modern Hotel for Salem.”

The salesmen were trained by the Hockenbury Company of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and licensed by the Chamber of Commerce. They were divided into 16 teams, with four teams to a division, and competed for highest sales honors.

Daily sales totals were posted on a billboard in Town House Square and published in *Ho, Tell!*, a newsletter that was published throughout the course of the drive.

In all, more than a thousand area residents and businessmen bought stock in what would become the Hawthorne Hotel. Those stockholders owned the hotel until a group of local businessmen acquired a controlling interest after World War II.

The Hawthorne Opens

The Hawthorne Hotel opened for business amidst much fanfare and excitement on July 23, 1925. The public festivities kicked off on July 21 as thousands turned out for an afternoon parade. After, the mayor and Salem Hotel Corporation President Frank Poor raised the American flag for the first time on the hotel's rooftop flagpole.



Judge Alden White, chairman of the Hawthorne Memorial Association, suggested the hotel be named in honor of the author of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of Seven Gables*, Nathaniel Hawthorne. “There could be no more certain indication that Salem loves and honors her famous son than this fine building named for him,” said Hildegard Hawthorne, granddaughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne at the hotel's opening night banquet.

The Hawthorne Hotel hosted its first wedding reception on October 17, 1925, just a few months after opening its doors for business.

The newlyweds were Lucretia Johnson Perkins of Salem, and William Russell Burns of Logansport, Indiana. The couple met while Burns was in Salem overseeing the building of the Hawthorne Hotel.

The wedding was held at the Second Unitarian Church. After the ceremony, the guests were received by the bride and groom in the Hawthorne Hotel lounge and dined and danced the night away in the beautiful main ballroom.

The Burns event was just the beginning of what is now a time-honored tradition. Today, approximately 100 couples hold their wedding receptions at the Hawthorne Hotel each year.

