

July 4th, 1804, "The rarest genius America has given to literature." He was, in a great measure, extremely fortunate in his ancestry; not for the rugged ways and gross injustice of these hardy pioneers, but for the best Puritan traits modified and combined into a noble manhood. The family was of English origin and one of the oldest in Salem, the first Hawthorne being William who came over in 1630 and figured in the Quaker persecutions. His son was John, judge of the witchcraft trials in Salem. Of his ancestors Hawthorne tells us:

"Planted deep in the town's earliest infancy and childhood, by those two earnest and energetic men, the race has ever since subsisted here; always, too, in respectability; never, so far as I have known, disgraced by a single unworthy member. — — — From father to son, for about a hundred years, they followed the sea; a grayheaded shipmaster, in each generation, retiring from the quarter deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grandsire."

His father, Nathaniel, also was a sea-captain and died of fever at Surinan, South America, in 1808, leaving a widow and three children of whom Nathaniel was the second child. He was two years younger than Elizabeth and four years older than Louisa. After this calamity befell his mother, she withdrew into seclusion and remained a strict hermit till her death, and this fact alone would have a great influence over her children. She removed to a house, belonging to her brother, in Herbert street, and it was here that Hawthorne's early boyhood was spent.

When but a mere boy he had a keen sense of the ludicrous and was more precocious, we might say, than most boys of his years. He had a certain ascendancy over his playmates, "which could be enforced, at need, by his personal strength and pugnacity. He was daring but never reckless; he did