

Jonathan Clark Felt
1619 Capistrano Avenue
Spring Valley, CA 91977

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Kenneth Hutchins, Stake President
Boston Massachusetts Stake

Dear President Hutchins et al:

When I saw the Church News article last weekend I was stunned, but not surprised. I have always thought the house should be preserved, but I never put it together like you and Sister Benvie have done. Moreover, I've always considered one of my earthly purposes was to shed more light on Nathaniel Henry Felt's life.

Background: In 1995 I was caught in one of your area's famous nor'easter storms and had to stay for a few days in Salem while things cleared out. I knew my being there could be turned to good if I wanted it to be. From the Hawthorne Hotel's restaurant I overheard grand plans from the Mayor sitting next to my table, and I was fortunate to explain Nathaniel Felt's role in our church's history to others including the director of the Essex Institute and one of their architects. They were surprised to learn their own administration building was probably the home of Nathaniel H. Felt in 1842-44 while he was President of the Salem Branch. When I told them about Brigham Young's daughter Vilate, the story started sinking in more for them, and they were excited.

I left Salem promising to follow-up, but life overtook me again. That's why I am so pleased that Sister Benvie was following the Spirit. It's most convincing to see how the Lord works with or without us. Eventually I would have been led to you both, and eventually I was anyway. How grateful I am to you both and to the Lord.

Nathaniel Henry Felt's legacy is extensive and members of our family will long herald you both as great friends. Through your efforts, my own resolve has strengthened to complete what I've been prompted to do since I was 9 years old. My thoughts and prayers will be with you as you present your project to our church leaders in Salt Lake next week. I wish I could be there to listen.

Yours truly,

Jonathan C. Felt