

THE STORY BEHIND THE BOOK

EVERY FAMILY HAS A STORY. SOME HELP EXPLAIN A NATION.

Faith and Fortune is an extensively researched work of American history that spans the years 1780 to 1880, bringing to life a remarkable but largely forgotten chapter of the nation's past through the true story of Captain Henry Champlin and his wife, Amelia.

Beginning in the Connecticut shipbuilding town of Pettipaug (renamed Essex in 1823), the book follows Henry and Amelia as they build a life together during one of the most transformative periods in American history. Guided by faith, family, and determination, they navigate the opportunities and uncertainties of a young nation finding its place in an increasingly interconnected world.

At the heart of their story is the rise of the transatlantic packet ship—a revolutionary form of regularly scheduled ocean transportation that connected New York and Great Britain. These swift, powerful vessels carried everything from raw cotton, finished textiles, artwork, and gold... to immigrants, mail, and ideas, helping shape America's emergence as a global commercial power.

Through the Champlins' experiences, readers discover how families in Essex and throughout the Connecticut River Valley played a vital role in a vast maritime network stretching from New England to New York, the American South, Europe, and beyond. Their story reveals how ordinary lives were intertwined with extraordinary historical change.

Along the way, *Faith and Fortune* explores many defining moments and movements in American history, including:

- The War of 1812
- The Erie Canal and the rise of New York as America's leading port
- The development of transatlantic steamships
- Irish immigration during the Potato Famine
- The Second Great Awakening
- Slavery, abolition, and the Civil War
- American architecture, material culture, and advances in shipbuilding
- The changing roles of women, family, and community in the Early Republic and Victorian eras

By weaving an intimate family narrative into the larger forces of economic growth, social change, and global commerce, *Faith and Fortune* offers readers a fresh perspective on America's early development. It is a story of ambition and enterprise, but also one of resilience, devotion, and the enduring values that shaped both a family and a nation.

As America commemorates its 250th anniversary, *Faith and Fortune* reminds us that the country's history was built not only by famous leaders and landmark events, but also by the countless families whose courage, work, and convictions connected local communities to a rapidly changing world.

