

**HENRY HARDWICK  
FAXON, MDCCCXXIII-  
MDCCCXCV.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649331499

Henry Hardwick Faxon, MDCCCXXIII-MDCCCXCV. by Various

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Cover @ 2017

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**VARIOUS**

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Henry H. Faxon

**HENRY HARDWICK FAXON**

**MDCCCXXIII • MDCCC<sup>1</sup>CV**



**PRIVATELY PRINTED AT**

**THE RIVERSIDE PRESS**

**MDCCC<sup>1</sup>CVI**

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

*George Washington Peck*





## HENRY HARDWICK FAXON

THE FAXON name is among the oldest in Quincy, running back to Thomas Faxon, who came from England previous to 1647. Since that date the name appears frequently in the town records, denoting substantial farmers and trusted town officials. By marriage those bearing it have become related to about all of the noted families in this historic community. To Job and Judith B. (Hardwick) Faxon was born in Quincy, September 28, 1823, Henry Hardwick Faxon. No other member of the characteristically vigorous and independent Faxon race has become better known. Like so many of the famous men of Massachusetts, he found a way to success through the common school, the farm, and the shoemaker's bench. In every one of these places his rich endowment of faculty received training, so that when he established a grocery and provision store in Quincy, a door was soon opened, to a larger enterprise in Boston. In 1854 he became a member of the firm of Faxon, Wood & Co., retail grocers in that city. Later the firm was known as Faxon Brothers & Co., in the wholesale trade.

A large measure of success attended their operations, which still fell to Henry when he retired from the firm in 1861, and threw himself into more daring mercantile enterprises. The tide was with him, for the extensive purchases he made on the eve of the civil war, on his journeys south to Cuba and New Orleans, were sold at a price which brought large profits. It was at this time that, with his quick perception of the situation of affairs, he anticipated a sharp rise in the price of liquors, and placed in store, and later sold at an advance, several hundred barrels. This single transaction is the foundation of the charge that Mr. Faxon made his money by selling rum. It was not an inconsistency, for up to that time he was not a temperance advocate. His fortune was made in ordinary mercantile ventures and in real estate dealings. "As a business man Mr. Faxon seemed to know intuitively the state of the future as well as current markets; and the boldness of his operations, and the manner of his purchases, though unerringly clear to himself, seemed to others audacious, even wild and reckless, and astonished his associates by their successful issues."

On the 18th of November, 1852, he married

Mary Burbank Munroe, a daughter of the well-known Boston merchant, Israel W. Munroe, and Priscilla (Burbank) Munroe. Thus happily situated in a delightful home, and with an independent fortune early achieved, Mr. Faxon was now quite content to retire from mercantile life. Always thrifty, the passion for heaping up riches beyond a competence never possessed him. Now, one might naturally conclude, he would turn to a life of well-earned ease, and the delights of some of the many advantages of our advanced civilization. Such a course would find justification in what is ordinarily called common sense. But in Mr. Faxon's character there was an original, an incalculable, element, which lifted his actions out of the line which might be predicted of ordinary men. There was also a moral earnestness, hitherto mostly dormant, which craved expression. So it was precisely at this point that his restless energies broke into a new career upon an untried sea.

In 1864, and again in 1872, he was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. Here it was, that as a member of the Committee on Liquor Laws, he became impressed with two facts which influenced all his after life. These were the evils