

Ota's Sister City, Salem

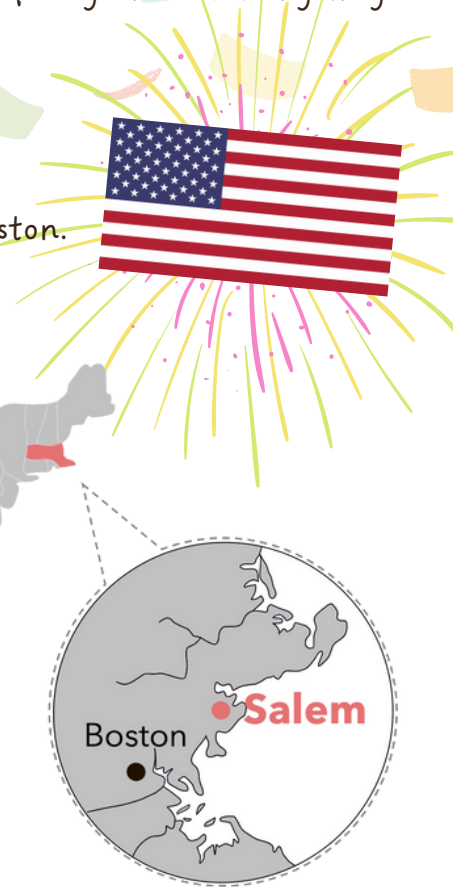
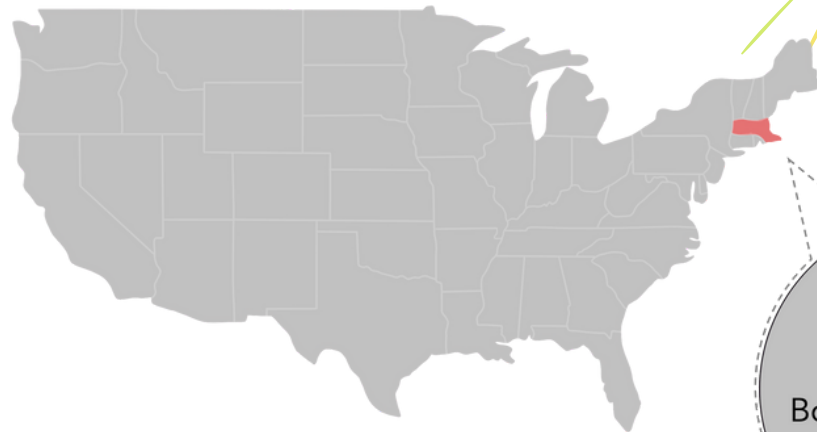
As of November 18th, 2021, Ota and Salem celebrate 30 years of continued sister city relations. How much do you know about Salem and its relationship with Ota?

For this issue of my Ota City Art Journal, to celebrate the 30 years of exchange between the cities of Ota and Salem, I would like to write about Salem and its history with Ota - specifically when and why they became sister cities, and what it exactly means to be "sister cities".

● Where is Salem?

Salem is located in Massachusetts (USA), less than 1 hour by car from Boston.

<p>Population</p> <p>approx. 43,000 people (2019)</p>
<p>Size</p> <p>approx. 47km²</p>



● What kind of place is Salem?

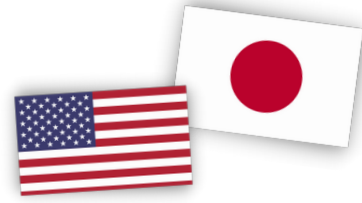
Salem is a historic coastal city in Essex County, Massachusetts. Founded in 1626, one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in America. The land was first titled Naumkeag, but settlers preferred to call it Salem, derived from the Hebrew word for "Peace" (Shalom).

Despite being a small city, Salem is rich in culture and history. The city is known by many as the "Witch City" due to the infamous witch trials of 1692. Symbols of this history can be seen throughout the city all year round, but are particularly prominent during autumn when tourists from all over the US travel to Salem to celebrate Halloween. Numerous locations in Salem were also used as locations for the filming of witch-related films and TV, including the Halloween favourite "Hocus Pocus" (1993) and the seventh season of the well known tv show "Bewitched" (1970).

As a coastal city with a port, Salem also played a significant role throughout the early 19th century. Ships from Salem were pioneers in the India trade, opening up commerce with many countries, including Africa, China, Russia, Japan and Australia.

● Why did Ota and Salem become sister cities?

While Ota and Salem became sister cities 30 years ago in 1991, the roots of their friendship goes back to 1877...



1877

During a trip to Japan from Salem, Dr. Edward S. Morse, an American zoologist and archaeologist discovered the **Omori Shell Mounds** when looking out a train window while travelling from Yokohama to Shimbashi.

1880

After returning back to Salem in 1880, Dr. Morse was assigned to be the **3rd director of the Peabody Academy of Science** (now known as the Peabody Essex Museum). Dr. Morse brought back with him many Japanese handicrafts which he had collected during his stay in Japan, forming a historical and cultural link between Japan (and Ota City) and Salem.

1984

In 1984, a **sister museum agreement** was formed between the Folk Museum in Ota and the Peabody Museum in Salem (renamed from the Peabody Academy of Science in 1915 and currently known as the Peabody Essex Museum).

1991

The relationship between Ota and Salem further developed, with the two cities becoming **sister cities** in 1991. Since then, the relationship between Ota and Salem has continued to grow through exchange trips, correspondence and mutual support. In 1992, the Mayors of Ota City and Salem planted a cherry blossom tree in Salem to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of becoming sister cities. A cherry blossom tree was also planted in the Tamagawa-dai Park in Ota during the Mayor of Salem's visit to Ota in 2004. These trees still stand as a symbol of the continuing growth and strength of the relationship between Ota and Salem.

● What does being "sister cities" mean?

When two cities agree to become "sister cities", they are forming a strong link between their cities and communities. Ota and Salem are initially connected historically through Dr. Morse and later the sister museum agreement between the Folk Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum. As sister cities, Ota and Salem have also formed a growing cultural link. For example, during the delegations to and from each other's cities, the people of Ota share Japanese culture with the people of Salem, and vice versa. While Ota and Salem are separated by distance, they are connected by the ties of friendship between everyone involved in the sister city relationship, including both those who organise the exchange between the cities and those who participate in it.

While the pandemic has made it difficult to see each other in person, exchange between Ota and Salem has continued online, through e-mail correspondence and Zoom meetings. The two cities also exchanged gifts and videos in support of getting through the pandemic together.

Why don't you also try broadening your horizons by getting interested in a country outside of Japan?

To read more about the exchange between Ota and Salem, visit the Ota City Homepage:



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