

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
224 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108



Newburyport

Address 325-327 Merrimac Street

Historic Name Morse-Kenniston House

Original Residence

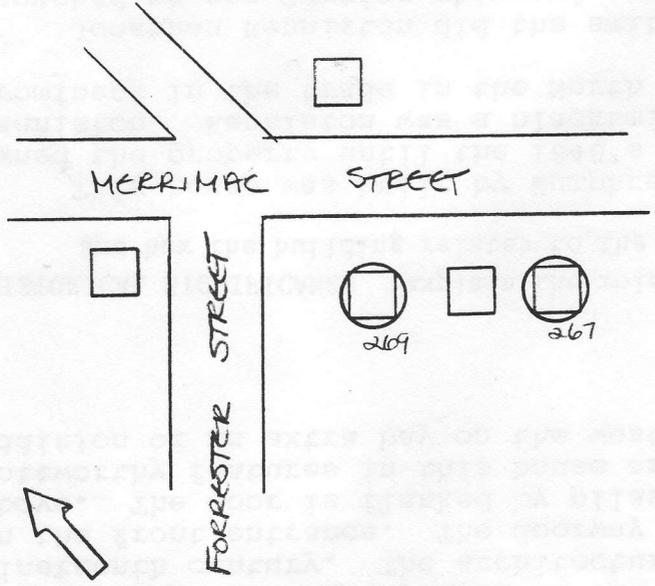
Present Residence

Ownership:  Private individual  
 Private organization

Public

Original owner Humphrey Morse

Draw map showing location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings or geographical features. Indicate north.



DESCRIPTION:

Date c. 1790

Source Essex County Registry of Deeds

Style Federal

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric Clapboards

Outbuildings Garage

Major alterations (with dates) house extended on bay, porch added, (dates unknown)

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. acreage 27,816 sq. ft.

Setting in residential area of eighteenth and nineteenth century dwellings along the banks of the Merrimack River.

Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt  
Organization Office of Community Development  
Date 12-26-80

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

This two story house with pitched roof is an excellent example of the Federal style as interpreted in the vernacular around the turn of the nineteenth century. The architectural detail is limited and is focused in the front entrance. The doorway is arched with a semi-circular fanlight above. The door is flanked by pilasters supporting a pediment above. Other noteworthy features in this house are the central chimney and the apparent addition of an extra bay on the western end of the house.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

This house was built by Humphrey Morse shortly after 1785. Morse owned the property until the 1840's when it was acquired by Jonathan Kenniston. Kenniston was a blacksmith. The Kenniston family was very prominent in the trade in the North End's shipbuilding industry.

Jonathan Kenniston did the smithwork for the vessel "Ida L. Hull" launched at the Currier shipyard in 1882 and for the "J. R. Teel" launched in 1889. Kenniston also owned an interest in several vessels built in Newburyport.

This house remained in the Kenniston family until the early nineteenth century. In 1925 George A. Weare, who had acquired the house from Mary Kenniston, sold the property to George Xilas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- R. Cheney, History of Merrimac River Shipbuilding, Newburyport, 1964  
Assessor's Records 1890-1980  
1851 Plan of Newburyport, Mass. H. McIntire  
1872 Map of the City of Newburyport, Mass. D. G. Beers and Co.  
1851, 1871 City Directories  
Deed Research compiled by Mrs. Nancy Flynn and Mrs. Kathy Horden.