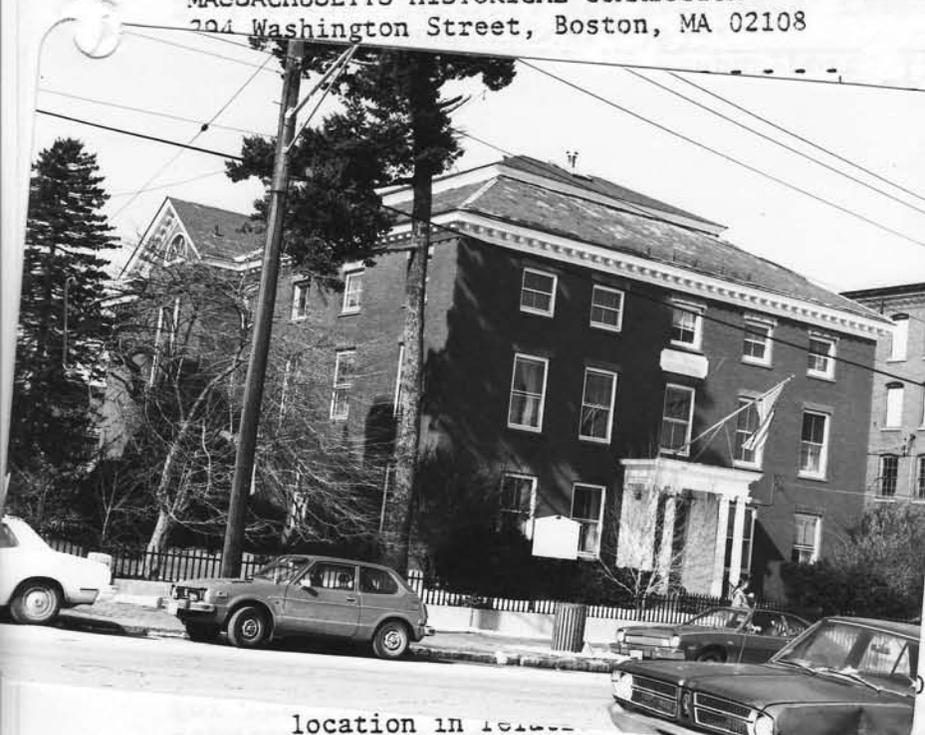


FORM B - BUILDING

Area	Form no.
	365

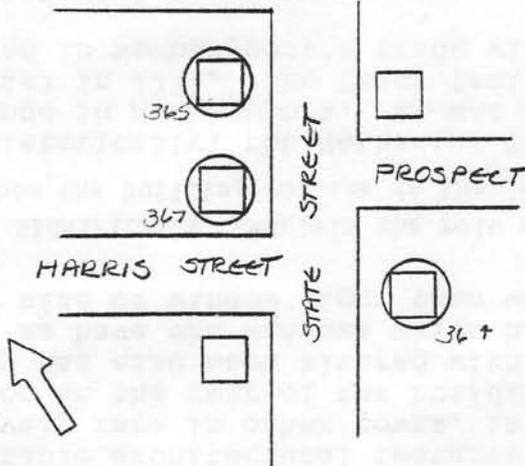
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108



City Newburyport
Address 94 State Street
Historic Name Nathaniel Tracy House
Original Residence
Present Newburyport Public Library
Ownership: Private individual
 Private organization
Public City of Newburyport
Original owner Nathaniel Tracy

location in relation to
cross streets and other buildings
or geographical features.
Indicate north.

PRINCE PLACE



DESCRIPTION:

Date 1771
Source Currier, "History of Nbpt."
Style Georgian
Architect Unknown
Exterior wall fabric Brick
Outbuildings _____
Major alterations (with dates) remodeled as library (1864), addition of Simpson annex (1882), doorway altered, late nineteenth century.
Moved _____ Date _____
Approx. acreage 15,860 sq. ft.
Setting Adjacent to the central business district on street with excellent examples of Georgian, Federal and later domestic architecture.

Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt
Organization Office of Community Development
Date 06-30-80

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

The Nathaniel Tracy house is one of the most significant buildings in Newburyport. The building is Georgian in style as is indicated by its Baroque proportions. The dentil cornice and brownstone lintels are notable architectural features. The double hipped roof, while relatively rare in other towns, is not unusual in Newburyport. The addition at the rear of the building was built in 1882. The entrance doorway has also been altered with the addition of the Ionic entrance porch, as have the windows which have been replaced with sash with a larger size of window light than would have in the building originally. (cont.)

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

Historically, the Nathaniel Tracy House is one of the most important buildings in Newburyport. It was built by Patrick Tracy for his son Nathaniel in 1771. The Tracy family was of Irish descent and was heavily involved in Newburyport's trade with the West Indies.

Nathaniel Tracy is prominent in Newburyport's history. He owned a fleet of 110 ships including many that were fitted out and commissioned as privateers during the Revolutionary War. Nathaniel married the daughter of Colonel Jeremiah Lee, one of Marblehead's most prominent citizens. Tracy served as a representative to the Massachusetts State Constitutional Convention in 1779. He also was among those who petitioned for the incorporation of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1779. This organization was established to promote scientific and philosophical investigations. It was only the second such organization on this continent. Tracy helped to organize St. John's Lodge and served as selectman in the Town of Newburyport between 1780 and 1782. Benedict Arnold dined with Nathaniel Tracy in his home on September 17, 1775.

The Tracy fortune was devastated by the Revolutionary War and the house was taken over by Jonathan Jackson, Tracy's brother-in-law and business partner. Jackson, the senior partner in the importing firm of Jackson, Tracy, and Tracy, was a member of the committee of safety, correspondence and inspection in 1774 and 1775 and was elected to the General Court in 1776 and 1777. In May, 1782, he was chosen as a delegate to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. He was elected to the Massachusetts Senate for the 1789 session and in 1790, was appointed one of the commissioners to take the census for the United States Government.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- J. M. Howells, Architectural Heritage of the Merrimack, N. Y. 1941.
- J. J. Currier, History of Newburyport 1764-1905, Vols. I and II., reprint, Newburyport, 1977.
- B. Labaree, Patriots and Partisans, Cambridge, 1962.
- Statement of Proceedings, Newburyport Public Library, 1866.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newburyport	Form No: 365
Property Name: Nathaniel Tracy House 94 State Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: (CONTINUED)

The interior has been extensively altered but the director's room of the library retains several elegant interior details, including the original fireplace mantel.

In 1863 the house was remodeled to house the Newburyport Public Library. The alterations were completed in 1865 according to the designs of noted Boston architect, Arthur Gilman, a native of Newburyport.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

He lived in Boston for several years before he died in 1810. While Jackson lived in the Tracy house, he entertained some of our contry's most illustrious citizens. On August 16, 1788, John Hancock, then Governor of Massachusetts, was the guest of Jonathan Jackson. On October 30, 1789, President George Washington visited Newburyport and was provided with an apartment in the Tracy house where he visited with John Quincy Adams, then studying law in Newburyport.

Between 1791 and 1796, Newburyport's eccentric and self-styled "Lord Timothy Dexter" lived in the Tracy house. Shortly, thereafter, James Prince purchased the house. Prince, also a merchant, was one of Newburyport's early selectman and, at one time, collector of the port. He fell into hard times and was forced to rent the house in 1807. At that time, Mr. James Coburn opened the house to travellers as the Sun Hotel. He operated his business here until 1810 when he moved to a dwelling closer to the Newburyport Turnpike.

By 1824, Mr. James Prince was again in residence in the Tracy House. On August 24th of that year, General Marquis de LaFayette was escorted to the house by parade where he dined with invited guests before spending the night.

In 1851, Moses Colman who had a livery stable on Temple Street lived in the Tracy House.

In 1863, the building was purchased by the Newburyport Public Library at a cost of \$6,000.00 raised primarily through subscription. The remodeling was directed by the noted Boston architect, Arthur Gilman, who was a native of Newburyport. The construction superintendent was Albert Currier, one time mayor of the City. The cost of the alterations was \$10,314.96 and no fees were charged by either Gilman or Currier. In September 1865, the building was conveyed to the city and it was opened to the public on January 1, 1866. The Newburyport Public Library is one of the oldest public libraries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

(cont).

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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newburyport	Form No: 365
Property Name: Nathaniel Tracy House 94 State Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED) PAGE 3

In 1881, realizing the need for additional space in the library, Michael H. Simpson of Boston and others contributed \$22,000.00 for the construction of a reading room. The Simpson annex was completed and dedicated April 28, 1882.

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