

FRUIT STREET SURVEY REPORT

The short street extending from High Street at the southwest end to Prospect Street at the northeast end was called Fruit Street in deeds as early as 1801. On September 7, 1798 Benjamin Balch, yeoman, of Newburyport conveyed a lot of land containing 2 acres and 42 rods to mariner/merchant Benjamin Wyatt and merchant Richard Pike for the sum of \$2,051 (Essex Co. Deed Book 163, Page 192). The transaction also included a building although its location and use are not specified (perhaps 24 Prospect?). Wyatt and Pike laid out what became Fruit Street through the approximate center of this property. The property measured 2 chains 60 links on High Street and 3 chains 29 links on Prospect Street (1 chain = 66 feet; 100 links = 1 chain).

On either side of Fruit Street Wyatt and Pike divided the land into lots with frontages ranging from 1 chain 31 links (86.4 ft.) to 1 chain 50 links (99 ft.). The lots were sold by Wyatt and Pike beginning in 1799 and continuing through 1805. Captain Jonathan Dalton was one of the first to purchase a lot. On April 16, 1799 he bought the land under the present 3 Fruit Street for \$450 (Book 167, Page 63). Among the others purchasing lots were mariner/merchant Stephen Holland who paid \$747 in 1801 for the lot at the northeast corner of Fruit and High Streets and \$693 in 1804 for the lot to the north. Jonathan Young, Perley Tenney, William Moulton and Joseph Noyes 4th also purchased land. Many of those buying land were mariners/merchants. There also appear to have been considerable familial connections that led them to settle on the same street. It is known that Perley Tenney married Maria Ingalls and that Joseph Noyes 4th was married to Elizabeth Ingalls. William Moulton's wife was Judith Noyes (perhaps related to Joseph Noyes?). Additional research may help clarify possible relationships. Tax records at the Newburyport Archival Center are available beginning in 1809 and are useful for providing the names of those owning property on Fruit Street. For example, Salem Woodward paid taxes for a house on Fruit Street from 1809 to 1812 but has not yet been linked to a specific house on the street. Merchant Perley Tenney is linked to three buildings on Fruit Street. He lived at what is now 20 Fruit Street but also owned the double houses at 6-8 Fruit Street and 10-12 Fruit Street. Probate records from his estate refer to the latter as tenements although some of the units were occupied at times by family members.

Most of the houses on Fruit Street are good examples of the Federal period, three stories in height with foreshortened third stories and hip roofs. Some of the houses are set with a symmetrical five-bay street façade; others are set with their narrow end to the street. Classically-inspired detailing including decorative lintels and door surrounds is common. Although local legend suggests that deed restrictions were in part responsible for the relative uniformity of design along Fruit Street, no substantiation could be found. None of the deeds encountered including that from Balch to Wyatt and Pike or from Wyatt and Pike to the various buyers includes any stipulation that the houses must be three stories high as has been popularly reported. More likely, the buildings share such similarities because so many were built in a relatively short time span during which the Federal style was popular. The regularity of design would have made the buildings relatively easy to

construct. The smaller third floor windows may have been in response to a tax on living space or windows.

Tucked among the Federal-style dwellings on Fruit Street is one building which merits special note. The three-story brick building to the rear of 16-18 Fruit Street was erected by Jacob Perkins about 1808 to house an engraving plant operation. Here Massachusetts currency was engraved and much of it was printed. Tax records confirm that Jacob Perkins was taxed for a brick store on Fruit Street in 1810. By 1820 the building is referred to as a factory. The only other brick building on the street – 7 Fruit Street – remains a bit of an enigma. It is unusual for its choice of building material which suggests it may have had a use which required fireproof construction. The building is known to have been owned by druggists David Wheeler Jones and Anthony Stickney Jones in the 1830s and later but there is no indication that the building was used for anything other than a residential purpose.

Fruit Street was not formally laid out and accepted by the town of Newburyport until May 1826. It was laid out through the land of Green Sanborn, Moses Brown, John N. Cushing and Daniel Foster. Whether design restrictions were enacted at that time is not known although none have been found in any deeds.

U.S. Census Records available for the Fruit Street neighborhood provide additional interesting information about the inhabitants of the houses, including ages, occupations, and ethnicity. Over the years, the number of occupants changes and may include extended family members and boarders.

In the late 19th century two cases of infill construction occurred on vacant land along Fruit Street. About 1877 Daniel Silloway, a carpenter, constructed what is now 14 Fruit Street. Despite its later date of construction, the three-story house blends well with the earlier Federal-style dwellings on the street and continues the tradition of smaller third floor windows. It also appears that the windows lintels on the north side of the adjacent property at 16-18 Fruit Street were altered to match those on the newer structure at 14 Fruit Street. In contrast, the Safford House at 5 Fruit Street, constructed in 1891, is much more a product of its period. An excellent example of the Queen Anne style, this is the only gable-roofed house on the street and is notable for its textured wall surfaces and decorative detail.

In the 20th and early 21st centuries Fruit Street has continued to retain its unique character and scale. There has only been one case of new construction in recent years and its design pays homage to earlier Federal style dwellings. Over the years several buildings have been divided into apartments. There are several recent cases of vinyl siding although thankfully trim has not been removed.

Lisa Mausolf
Architectural Historian
November 2005

Fruit Street Survey, 2005

Address	Historic Name	Approx. Const. Date	Style
1 Fruit Street	Moses Brown House	c.1790	Federal
2-4 Fruit Street	Joseph Noyes 4 th Double House	c.1807	Federal
3 Fruit Street	Jonathan Dalton House	c.1799	Federal
5 Fruit Street	Wm. & Lucy Safford House	1891	Queen Anne
6-8 Fruit Street	Perley Tenney Double House	c.1805	Federal
7 Fruit Street	Jones House	c.1820	Federal
9 Fruit Street	Peter LeBreton Jr. House	c.1805	Federal
10-12 Fruit Street	Perley Tenney Double House	c.1805	Federal
14 Fruit Street	Daniel & Isabel Silloway House	c.1877	
15 Fruit Street	Foley House	2004	Fed. Rev.
16-18 Fruit Street	Jacob Perkins House	c.1800	Federal
20 Fruit Street	Perley Tenney House	c.1801	Federal
96 High Street	Stephen Holland House	c.1801	Federal
98 High Street	Cushing House	c.1808	Federal
24 Prospect Street	Young-Foster House	c.1790	Georgian

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

15/79

Newburyport

308

Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 1 Fruit Street

Historic Name Moses Brown House

Uses: Present Residential (two family)

Original Residential

Date of Construction c.1790

Source deeds

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Clapboards

Roof Asphalt Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures
none

Major Alterations (with dates)

c.1860 – frame ell with Italianate doorway;

date? – brick ell;

c.1910 – enclosure of front door with glazed panels

Condition Good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes **Date**

Acreage less than ¼ acre

Setting Residential area predominantly dating to early 19th century. Houses are set close to the street and to each other. Many are good examples of the Federal style



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization City of Newburyport

Date (month / year) Oct. 2005

BUILDING FORM (1 Fruit Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Located at the northeast corner of Prospect Street and Fruit Street, 1 Fruit Street is a good example of a three-story, 5 x 2-bay, Federal-style residence. The clapboarded building has plain cornerboards and a simple frieze. It is capped by a hip roof with two interior brick chimneys and displays a foreshortened third story. Centered on the Fruit Street façade is a pedimented entrance portico supported by Doric columns. It is now set on a concrete base and has been enclosed by multi-light panels. The front door is a modern six-panel unit with two glazed upper panels. The windows on the first two floors contain double-hung 6/6 sash which are fitted with storm windows and shutters. On the façade these windows are topped by entablature lintels. The openings on the third floor contain small 4 x 3-pane fixed light windows.

Extending behind the north side of the house is a two-story, hip-roofed, clapboarded ell. Facing Prospect Street is a doorway with mid 19th c. Italianate-style brackets over the louvered door. Remaining fenestration includes 6/6 windows and modern casement windows at the rear. Offset behind the south half of the house is a brick two-story ell capped by a gable roof. Windows contain 6/6 sash and there is a transomed entrance on the south side while the entrance facing Fruit Street has a louvered panel outer door.

The property includes a fenced yard. There is a gravel driveway behind the house.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

It is believed that this house was built by Captain Moses Brown in 1794. A famous privateer, Brown was involved in the West India trade and was commander of the U.S. Sloop of War, *Merrimack*, which was built in Newburyport in 1798. Moses Brown died at sea in 1804 and his wife died in 1808. It appears that after their deaths, the house passed to the younger Moses Brown (1770-1819) who was also a sea captain. Moses Brown 3rd married Eunice Stickney in 1796. He was an active member of the Newburyport Marine Society and was lost at sea in 1819.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Eunice Brown continued to live here for many years. She is shown as the owner on the 1851 map. By 1860 the house was occupied by Mrs. Mary Brown, 59; Lawrence Brown, mariner, 28; John Brown, mariner, 26, Jane and Elizabeth. Elizabeth L. Brown (daughter of John and Mary Brown) owned and occupied the house from about 1880 until her death in 1923 at the age of 96. Census records indicate that she took in boarders.

By the late 1920s the house at 1 Fruit Street was occupied by County Clerk Frederick Huse, 41 and his mother Margaret Huse, 71. Among the boarders at the property was Lawrence Hayward, who was minister of the Unitarian church. What had become known as 1 ½ Fruit Street was rented by John Wilders, his wife Gladys and son, John.

Later owners included Raymond Haley, Allen Aylward, Geoffrey and Judith Moran, and Paul Cragin. The present owners, Tyrus and Sandra Porter, purchased the house in 1989.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.* **Already listed as part of NR district (8/2/1984).**

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
NEWBURYPORT

Property Address
1 FRUIT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	308
--	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Cheney, R. *History of Merrimac River Shipbuilding*. Newburyport: 1964.
Currier, J.J. *History of Newburyport, 1764-1905*, vols. I and II, reprint, Newburyport, 1977.
Essex County Registry of Deeds, Salem, Mass.
Howells, J.M. *The Architectural Heritage of the Merrimack*. New York: 1941.
Newburyport City Directories, various dates.
Newburyport Daily News, January 30, 1923 (Obituary of Elizabeth L. Brown).
Newburyport Herald, January 10, 1804 (Obituary of Moses Brown).
Newburyport Vital Records.
Photograph collection, Newburyport Archival Center at the Newburyport Public Library
Stirgwalt, Mary Jane. Inventory form for 1 Fruit Street, 1980.
"Teaching Couple Acquires Capt. Moses Brown House", *Newburyport Daily News*, April 11, 1969.
U.S. Census, Newburyport.

Maps

1851 Plan of Newburyport, Mass. H. McIntire.
1872 Map of the City of Newburyport, Mass. D.G. Beers and Co.
1884 Map of Newburyport
Sanborn Insurance Maps.