

FORM B - BUILDING

Area	Form no.
	318

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 224 Washington Street Boston MA 02108



City Newburyport

Address 20 Fruit Street

Historic Name Tenney-Hale House

Original Residence

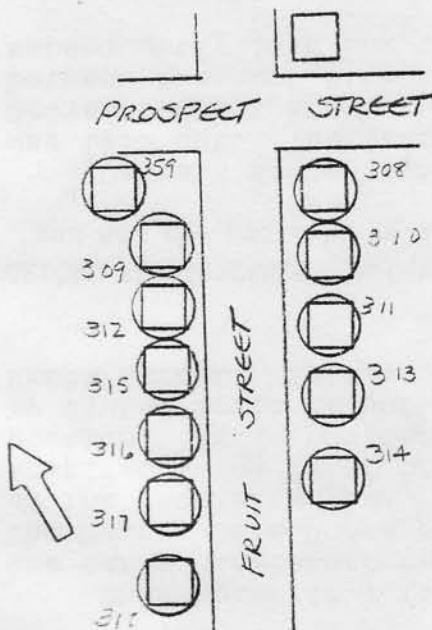
Present Residence

Ownership:  Private individual  
 Private organization

Public

Original owner Capt. Samuel Tenney

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



Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwort  
 Organization Office of Community Development  
 Date 8-25-80

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1801

Source Howells, "Architectural Heritage of the Merrimack"

Style Federal

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric Clapboards

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Major alterations (with dates) porch addition at rear (date unknown)

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

Approx. acreage 4,030 sq. ft.  
in a residential area of single  
Setting and double houses built for  
the most part, during the first decade  
of the nineteenth century. The homes  
are closely spaced and have little land  
on the street side. Many are fine  
examples of the Federal style.

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

This house is a fine example of the Federal style as built during the early nineteenth century by Newburyport's merchants and sea captain. The Tenney-Hale House has the three story hipped roof from characteristic of the Federal style. The cornice and window lintels are classically inspired. The front door is simple but has an exceptional entrance portico. It is pedimented with a Doric entablature and is supported by fluted Doric columns. There are several other Doric porticos on Fruit Street. This is the most elaborate.

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

Captain Samuel Tenney built this house shortly after Fruit Street was laid out. The site of the house was part of a large tract owned by Benjamin Wyatt and Richard Pike. These two men acquired the land between Prospect Street and High Street in 1798. Fruit Street was subsequently laid out through this tract.

Samuel Tenney was prominent in Newburyport's mercantile community. He was part owner of the schooner "Nancy", built in Newburyport in 1785. He was one of the members of the Merrimack Fire and Marine Insurance Company and held the position of secretary of the Merrimack Insurance Company for many years. Tenney was an officer of the Institution for Savings and was also involved in Newburyport's charitable institutions. In 1820 he served as vice-president of the Newburyport Sabbath School and Tract Society and in 1819 he was one of the incorporators of the Newburyport Howard Benevolent Society. Capt. Tenney served as town treasurer 1811-1812.

After Capt. Tenney's death his wife continued to live in the house. By 1872 the property had been sold to Capt. Lawrence W. Brown who owned the house for several decades. Brown was the captain and part owner of the ship "Mary L. Cushing," christened in 1883. This was the last ship to be launched from the shipyard of John Currier, Jr.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- R. Cheney, History of Merrimac River Shipbuilding, Newburyport, 1964.
- J. J. Currier, History of Newburyport 1764-1905, vols. I and II, reprint, Newburyport 1977.
- 1851 Plan of Newburyport, Mass. H. McIntire
- 1872 Map of the City of Newburyport, Mass. D. G. Beers and Co.
- 1851, 1871 City Directories