

6 Mount Vernon Ave. (circa 1848-1852)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



6 Mount Vernon Ave.

MHC photo

ca. 1968

Number 6 Mount Vernon Ave. is a substantial single-family Greek Revival house. It is constructed of red brick with granite and brownstone trimmings, and has five bays on the main façade and four bays on the side. It has a center hall plan.

There is a projecting closed masonry entrance porch, added at some point between 1885 and 1892. Still intact are late 19th century multipanel Victorian double doors and a short flight of granite front stairs. The enclosed one-story entrance porch has a heavy brownstone lintel over the front doors and dentilated



cornice. There are tall windows flanking the entrance. In general the windows have 2/2 wood sash and simple brownstone sills and lintels. The building culminates in a dentilated cornice. At the center of the gable roof is an octagonal cupola with small square windows. The end walls are characterized by planar services and distinctive linked chimney profiles.

Original owner: William Caban

Number 6 Mount Vernon Avenue is a rare Charlestown example of a substantial single-family masonry Greek Revival house crowned by an octagonal cupola. This house has significant historical associations with Eugene L Norton, 10th mayor of Charlestown. Built circa 1848-1851, this house's land is part of lot number 24 on a "plan of building lots, E Breed's mansion house land", March 1846 drawn by E Barker and G Leonard Junior). In 1846 the Breed estate was subdivided into 34 lots. The old Breed house was located at what is now 38 Mount Vernon Street. The Breed subdivision was located just two blocks to the southeast of the Bunker Hill Monument Association's 115 lot tract which was set out in 1839, with early house construction activity along Lexington, Monument and Concord Streets. The houses of Mount Vernon Street's upper portion are contemporaries of the earliest houses built around Monument Square, beginning 1847, but are considerably less substantial than, for example, 7 Monument Square (1847).

In any event Crustaus Hall sold number 6's land to Moses B Sewall in 1846 (see Middlesex 496:358). On August 1, 1846, Sewall, a Morocco manufacturer, sold number 6's land without buildings to William Caban, Charlestown cordage manufacturer, for \$1451. The building is first mentioned on

this property in a deed dated October 1, 1853-at that time Cabon, evidently 6's first owner and occupant, sold this house to George P Sanger of Boston for \$6000. Sanger owned the house until April 30, 1860. At that time he sold it to Charlestown merchant George H Pierce for \$5450. Pierce, in turn, sold it three years later to 6 Mount Vernon Street's most illustrious owner-Eugene L Norton. On April 29, 1863 Norton paid Pierce \$6300 for this house.

Eugene L Norton was a noted figure in mid-late 19th century Charlestown politics, serving as the 10th Mayor of Charlestown during the late 1860s, on the eve of Charlestown's annexation to Boston in 1874. He was a leader in the Massachusetts Republican Party serving as a senator in the Massachusetts legislature. He was "businessman of ability and prosperity," for many years working as a partner in the firm of "Merriam and Norton Shoe Binders". His factory was located at the corner of Medford and Everett Streets. Later owners included "Todd and Norton trust (1885), Catherine E Sullivan (1890s), Mary F Kyle (1901), and the heirs of John P Reynolds (?), 1911.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Charlestown directories/Boston directories

Middlesex deeds-496: 358, 511: 314, 661:340, 831:335, 881:399

Charlestown Enterprise, February 1, 1919, page?

Middlesex plan, book 2A, plan 10

*Digitized and edited without change in content from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, with the addition of current photographs. In the case of houses that have been altered since the survey,

these photographs may not entirely correspond to the architectural description. If earlier photographs of suitable quality are available, these have been included.

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