

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	NWT.1711
Historic Name:	Allen, Nathaniel Topliff Homestead
Common Name:	Allen House
Address:	35 Webster St
City/Town:	Newton
Village/Neighborhood:	West Newton
Local No:	3140
Year Constructed:	R 1841
Architect(s):	Lucan, Milo
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival
Use(s):	Private School; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture; Education; Social History
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (1/9/1978)



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

NR 1/9/1978 NWT.1711

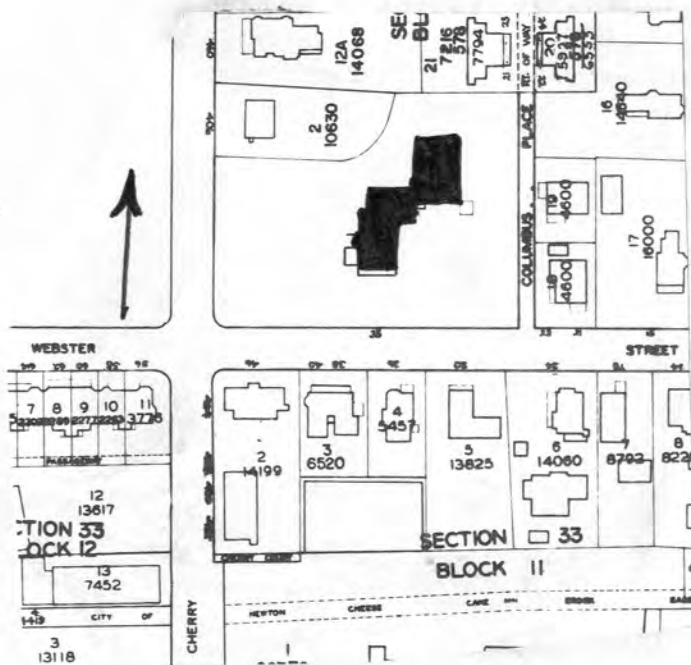
PR

In Area no.	Form no. 1711
	3140



Address West Newton
35 Webster Street
 Name Allen House
 Present use Residence/Vacant
 Present owner Newton Historic Preservation Association
 Description:
 Date 1841
 Source Jackson Homestead publication
 Style Greek Revival

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Architect Andrew H. Ward, builder
 Exterior wall fabric Clapboards
 Outbuildings (describe) Barn (attached)
 Other features Ionic portico, side entry, parlor windows

Altered Additions Date Late 19th, 20th c.
 Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:
 One acre or less X Over one acre _____
 Approximate frontage 285' x 160'
 Approximate distance of building from street 50'

6. Recorded by Kathlyn Hatch
 Organization Newton Historical Commission
 Date March 4, 1978

(over)

Major Significance
 Minor Significance

Contributing Significance
 No Significance

7. Original owner (if known) _____

Original use _____ Residence _____

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____ Residence and school _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	<u> X </u>	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u> X </u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u> X </u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The Allen House is one of Newton's most significant buildings, both architecturally and historically. A complex of structures that apparently incorporate elements from the 18th through the 20th centuries, the core consists of an impressive, colonnaded residence of the Greek Revival period.

The house is of the end-gabled type and features a monumental Ionic portico on the long street elevation. This position for the portico is relatively unusual in Greek Revival architecture, although there are several other examples in Newton. Attached to the house by a series of wings and ells is a front-gabled barn with a Greek Revival period louvered gable window. This section of the complex served as part of the Allen School at one time.

Nathaniel T. Allen began his career in education as a protoge of Horace Mann. As a young man he lived on West Newton Hill at the Mann residence, acting a principal of the model school conducted by the Normal School. The Normal School, founded by Horace Mann, offered teacher training and was one of the first institutions of its type in the country. Allen bought Mann's home when he moved to Antioch.

The house at 35 Webster Street was acquired in 1854. In that same year Allen established the West Newton English and Classical

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Friends of the Jackson Homestead. Newton's Older Houses: West Newton (1978), pp. 63-65.

Newton Historical Commission
35 Webster Street
Page Two

School with Cyrus Peirce, who had also been involved with Horace Mann's Normal School. Classes were held in a Greek Revival mansion on Washington Street (now demolished), which had been occupied previously by the Normal School.

The English and Classical School enjoyed a national reputation, attracting students from around the country and abroad. Four Allen brothers, four cousins, an uncle and Nathaniel's wife Caroline taught at the school. Several of the students were boarded at Allen's home.

The "Allen School," as it is often called, instituted several special features that were unusual for their day; it was co-educational, racially-integrated, and offered physical education, in addition to field trips and course work involving social welfare concerns and social issues such as abolition. The curriculum was progressive, emphasizing individual progress and creativity over the accumulation of factual information. One of the first kindergartens in the United States was established by the Allen School in 1864.

In addition to his position as a nationally prominent educator, Nathaniel Allen was involved in cultural and social welfare activities in Newton. An ardent supporter of the abolition and temperance movements, Allen was also associated with the Pomroy House for Orphan Girls in Newton Corner, the Perkins School for the Blind, the Newton Musical Association and the West Newton Athenaeum.

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

NRWD (R)
1/9/78

NWT.1711

1/9/78

In Area no.	Form no.
	41712



1. Town Newton (West Newton) -
Address 25 3/4 Webster Street,
Nathaniel T. Allen House
corner of Cherry Street.
Present use care-taker pending
settlement of estate

* Present owner estate of Ruby Keefer
(law firm: Warden, Patrick, Willard & Redding
Boston)

3. Description:
between
Date 1848 & 1852
Map of Newton 1848, Map of Middlesex City 1852,
Source Town of Newton Assessors Records 1852

Style Greek Revival
builder
Architect prob. Milo Lucas for John H
Stephenson

Exterior wall fabric wood - clapboard
Outbuildings (describe) large attached barn
partly reconstructed inside for classrooms,
bowling alley & gym
Other features house enlarged several

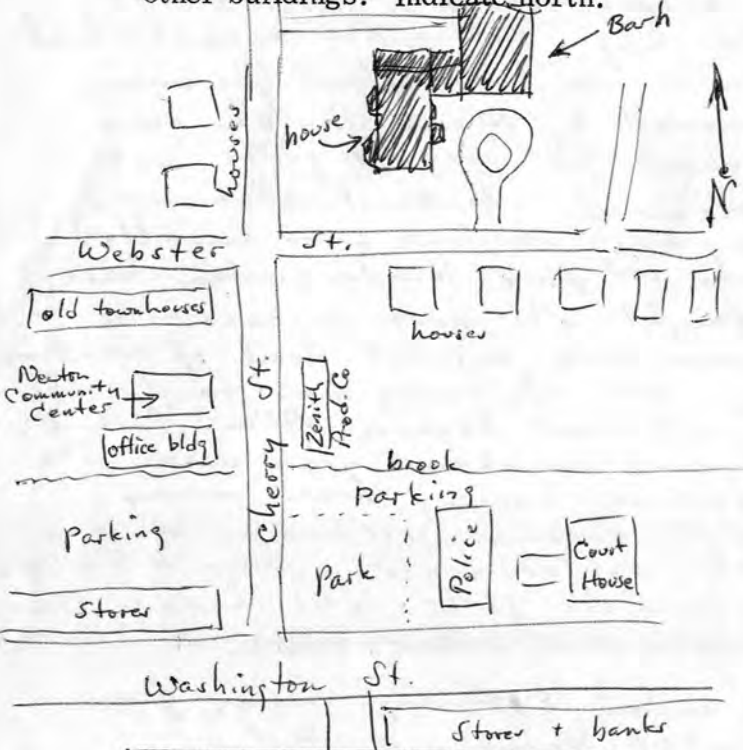
times during late 1800's for dormitory
rooms, dining hall, library as school
expanded

Altered enlarged Date 1870, 1890
Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:
Less than one acre _____ Over one acre
Approximate frontage '300' on Webster St.
Approximate distance of building from street
50' from Webster St.

6. Recorded by E. M. Mearns
Organization Newton Historical Commission
Date Jan 16, 1977

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant _____
MHC Photo no. _____

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JAN 16 1977

MASS. HIST. COMMISSION

* Legatee of estate: equal shares to
Trinity Church, Boston; Unitarian Church

7. Original owner (if known) J. D. Blanchard

Original use residence. Became home / dormitory by 1855

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Home of owner of a school + enlarged for dormitory space, classrooms + gym in barn

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science/ invention	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/ Humanitarian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Community development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

9. Historical Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This house is known as the Nathaniel T. Allen House in honor of its owner during the last half of the 1800's. Allen was a most prominent educator who ran a progressive school, the West Newton English & Classical School. He was a close associate of Horace Mann who began the 1st Normal school for women in West Newton ^{in 1845} with Allen as one of his teachers. Allen was in charge of the "model school" where students did their practice teaching. When the normal school outgrew its quarters by 1854 and moved to Framingham (becoming Fram. State College), Allen was persuaded by Mann to take over the building and begin a private school for boys & girls using the most inventive methods he had devised. The school also was the 1st in U.S. to be integrated - black students were enrolled even before the Civil War. Began the 1st pure kindergarten here, the 1st physical education program, taught all pure sciences to both boys & girls, learn Eng. grammar via a great deal of creative writing, economics, political geography, etc. Swimming was taught, also. Military drill popular elsewhere, was not used because Allen felt it taught unquestioned obedience. No physical punishment was used. The school was famous world wide, students coming from many foreign countries, and many students became well known doctors, scientists, scholars, inventors, judges, explorers, etc. After N.T. Allen's death, his 2 daughters ran a fine school for girls until the early 1940's.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

The entire Allen family in all branches + through many generations became influential in education throughout U.S.

Nathaniel Topliff Allen, Mary A. Greene 1906
 "Integration Way Back Then", Yankee Magazine Jan 1947 S. W. Taylor
The Allens in Education, Lucy E. Allen

Map of Newton 1855
 Map of Middlesex County 1852
 Map of Newton 1848
 Newton Assessors Records 1852
 Deeds bk 674, p244 E. Cambridge
 Cal. house, So. Middlesex Reg. of Deeds