

FORM B -BUILDING

Assessor' number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Map:40 Parcel 47

Reading

74

Town: North Reading, MA

Place (neighborhood or village) Sadler's Neck/

Uptons Corner

Address 108 Chestnut Street

Historic Name Upton-Parker-Howard Farmstead

Use: Present Private residence

Original Farm house

Date of Construction c.1845-1850

Source Middlesex County Deeds

Style/Form Italianate/ L-shaped

Architect/Builder Undetermined

Exterior Material

Foundation Granite block

Wall Clapboards

Roof Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures N/A

Major Alterations (with dates) Very intact

Condition Good

Moved  yes  no

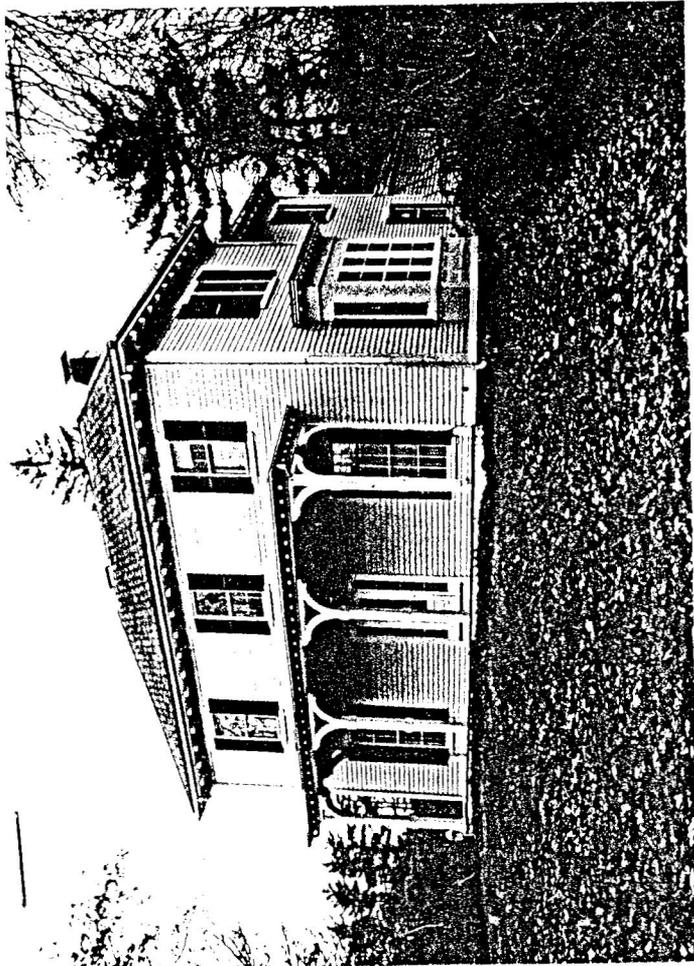
Acreage 0.82 acres

Setting Overlooking an ample lawn, this house has a deep set back from Chestnut Street. To the east of the house is the early nineteenth century Harmony Vale Cemetery. Woodlands located to rear of house.

Recorded by Edward W. Gordon

Organization North Reading Historical Commission

Date(month/day/year) 17/10/2001



## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

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

108 Chestnut Street ranks among the most substantial examples of the Italianate style in North Reading. Built c. 1845-1850, this clapboard-clad house is composed of a hip-roofed, two-story main block and two rear ells. Contiguous with the main block, the two-story ell measures three-bays-by-three-bays. Projecting from the two-story ell's rear wall is a small, one-story ell. The main block rises two stories from a granite block foundation to a low, asphalt-shingle covered hip roof. The main facade exhibits a full-length front porch exhibiting chamfered posts and diagonal bracing typical of Italianate porches. The center entrance is flanked by narrow, four-pane side lights. On either side of the main entrance are tall windows. Projecting from the center of the west wall is a square bay with a bracketed cornice. In general, windows contain 6/6 wood sash and are fully enframed with saw-cut tabs in evidence beneath window sills. In addition, saw-cut brackets are in evidence beneath the roof's eaves.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

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.

Built c. 1845-1850, 108 Chestnut Street has significant historical associations with North Reading's Upton, Parker and Howard families. An intensive, pre-1850 deed search would probably indicate that this property was carved from the extensive land holdings of William Whittredge who had resided in the area since at least the 1790s. His saltbox residence is still extant at 97 Chestnut Street. In addition, its early owners prospered in the town's important mid-nineteenth century shoe industry. Middlesex County deeds indicate that the house was extant by at least February 1850 when Frederic A. Upton of Reading paid the Andover Institution for Savings \$400 for "a certain piece of land situated in the North Parish with the dwelling house thereon." The deed notes that "this is the same premises deeded to Nabby Upton, Lysander Upton and John Nichols on 1 February, 1850." Upton owned this property for less than two years, selling it to G. E. Parker for \$800. According to the deed, Upton and Parker were shoe manufacturers.

Although figures are not available, the rise of boot and shoe manufacturing as an important component in North Reading's economy, beginning around 1820 and largely responsible for the growth of the town until 1860. According to Eaton's 1896 History of North Reading, "By 1850 there was a shop attached or placed by the side of

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

North Reading Maps/Atlases: 1795, 1831, 1857, 1875, 1889, 1906; Town of North Reading Street List, 1966  
North Reading Directories (Wakefield): 1896-97; 1905; 1907; 1911-12; 1919-20; 1931-1932; 1941  
Valuation of Real and Personal Estates, Town of North Reading: 1870; 1890; 1910; 1920; 1930  
Eaton, Chester W., & Warren Eaton, eds. Proceedings of the 250th Anniversary of the Ancient Town of N.R.  
Le Page, Samuel M. A History of North Reading, Tercentenary Ed., 1944

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125

<b>Community:</b> North Reading, MA	<b>Form No:</b>
<b>Property Name:</b> 108 Chestnut Street	

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

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE continued**

nearly every dwelling house in the precinct. After 1860, the shoe trade in North Reading and across New England went into a precipitous decline." By all accounts, "this trade was slashed dramatically by the intervention of the Civil War and the loss of the southern markets." After the cessation of hostilities in April 1865, agriculture was the leading source of income for the town's citizens.

Frederick Upton, this property's mid-nineteenth century owner, hailed from a prolific family who settled in North Reading as early as 1635. At that time, the John Uptons Sr. and Jr., along with seven other families, set up housekeeping in the North Precinct of Reading. For several centuries, Uptons were concentrated in the Sadlers' Brook section around and near the intersection of Chestnut Street and Upton Avenue.

Gustavus E. Parker, the owner of 108 Chestnut Street from 1851 until c. 1890 (?) seems to have abandoned shoe making by 1870. The real estate valuation of that year does not mention a (shoe) shop on the premises. By that time, the property encompassed a house worth an estimated \$800, a second house on a private way valued at \$300 as well as 2.5 barns with a combined value of \$300. Parker's tract was subdivided into one-acre and quarter-acre house lots valued at \$125 and \$40, respectively, along with a two-acre corner lot (\$300), the three-quarter-acre Whittredge Field (\$40), the three-plus acre Swamp Field (\$280); the one-thirty-second of an acre Barn lot (\$10), the pastures Whittredge (\$60) and Abbott (\$75) with a combined acreage of five acres, and the wood lots called Parker (\$300), Whittredge (\$1600) and Flint (\$400). These wood lots had a combined acreage of sixty-seven acres. With a total acreage of 80-plus acres, Gustavus E. Parker presided over a sizeable farm; a farm that evidently provided him with a comfortable income after the decline of the shoe industry. Indeed, it was reported in the May 25, 1878 edition of the *Reading Weekly News* that "The boot business grows duller, and the workmen are being discharged." By January, 18, 1879, the local paper noted that "Business seems to be leaving North Reading and prominent citizens there seem to think that it will soon be strictly speaking a farming town."

Conflicting evidence regarding ownership in 1890 is offered by the 1889 atlas and 1890 real estate valuation. According to the atlas, the owner was Luther Howard while the valuation continues to list Parker as the owner. Luther Howard owned no land and had a personal estate valued at \$2,000. Parker's domain embraced 60 acres and was worth an estimated \$8,160. The 1896-1897 Wakefield Directory (North Reading section) indicates that Luther G. Howard was living at Bellows Falls, Vermont and was employed in the hardware business. By 1910, Luther G. Howard had died and his widow had inherited an estate greatly reduced in size from 86 acres to just under fifteen acres. She owned 108 Chestnut Street until around 1930.

By the mid-1960s, this house was occupied by Emmeline Y. and Lawrence H. Marston, bank president.

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

Community  
North Reading

Property Address  
108 Chestnut Street

Area(s)

Form No.

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible only in a historic district  
 Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations:     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Statement of Significance by Edward W. Gordon Preservation

Consultant

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here*

The Upton-Parker-Howard House is considered eligible as a rare, relatively formal example of a c. late 1840s Italianate farmstead. Possessing integrity of siting, form, fabric and elements, this house has significant historical associations with two of the towns most enterprising families: the Uptons and the Parkers. In addition to agricultural pursuits, shoemaking was conducted on the premises by Frederic A. Upton (c.1845-1850) and Gustavus E. Parker (1851-1890). Shoemaking was a major facet of the local economy from the 1820s until 1860 with a precipitous decline in production during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.