

GUN HOUSE

This structure stood about where the playground is at South and South School streets. It was built by the federal government in 1808 to house U.S. owned military equipment.

~~The stone its fabric was quarried on Peirce Island by~~
and ferried over to the main land.

It was already redundant in 1873, whe it was reported on March 29th that the "arsenal on Soth Street is to be taken possession in the name of the city, and the same properly taken care of."

PJ - 21 July 1866 -- "We have before us a bill of Wm. Holman against the State of New Hampshire, for 5 days work each of 10 men and two yoke oxen, hauling cannon and shot from John Peirce's ^(Fort Washington) Island to the U.S. gun house in Portsmouth, N.H., in Oct. 1808.

"It thus appears there was a fortification there before the War of 1812, at which time the embankments now remaining were thrown up. Can any one give us a history of the first fort?"

PJ 7 Nov 74 -- "Petition of John A. Drugin, for leave to occupy a portion of the 'Gun House' for a stable was referred."

PJ 18 Jan 79 --

—On Friday last Governor Prescott found among the State archives at Concord a deed to the [State of the Arsenal property at the south end, dated November 5th 1827, and signed by Robert Neal, Edward Cutts and Alexander Ladd as agents, John Haven and Joshua W. Peirce as witnesses, and acknowledged before Hon. William Claggett, all of this city. This property has long been claimed by the city. On Saturday the Governor visited this city and notified the Mayor of the finding of the deed and took possession of the property in the name of the State of New Hampshire.

PJ 15 Feb 79 -- ... The committee on lands and buildings reported that the state had a lawful claim on the arsenal at the south part of the, and recommend that the committee be empowered to make arrangements regarding repairs that have been made there.

PJ 23 Aug 79 -- The Governor and Council are shortly to visit this city for the purpose of inspecting the State arsenal to see what repairs are needed. They will be entertained by officers of the National Guard.

PJ 17 July 1880 -- The Governor and Council are to visit this city on Wednesday next to examine into the condition of the State Arsenal. preparatory to its probable improvement.

PJ 14 Aug 80 -- The Governor and Council have deemed it practicable and advisable to make thorough repairs of the arsenal in this city and raise the roof so as to increase the height of the upper story, and thus furnish a good armory for all the militia companies in the city, for which an annual rent of \$500 is now being paid by the State; but the estimates for this work are about \$1300 by Moses Yeaton, while the State appropriated for the purpose \$1000.

PJ 16 Oct 80 -- Moses Yeaton of this city has begun the alterations on the State Arsenal in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted by the Governor and Council. The appropriation for this object is \$1000.

PJ 8 Oct 81 -- Governor asked Mayor Sise to supervise the repairs on the State Arsenal

PJ 12 Nov 81 -- Contract to repair arsenal given to William A. Hodgdon and Robert King. Among the improvements was a new floor in the second story, a new chimney and new flagstaff.

PJ 10 Dec 81 -- Two cannon owned by State, formerly used by the Dover battery, were brought here and put in State Arsenal by order of Mayor Sise.

PJ 28 Jan 82 -- Co. B, Portsmouth Cavalry, to dedicate new armory on South street next Wednesday with a dedicatory supper.

PJ 4 Feb 82 -

—A large and thoroughly sociable company assembled at the State arsenal on Wednesday evening by invitation of the Portsmouth Cavalry who on that date dedicated their new armory in the second story of that substantial structure. Capt. E. D. Coffin was chairman of the committee of arrangements and was ably assisted by his officers and privates from the ranks. Mr. James W. Goodwin of the Kearsarge House acted in the capacity of caterer, performing that duty in an admirable manner. Three long tables were set, each bearing tempting viands, to which the company did full justice. Post prandial exercises followed, Lieut. R. H. Perkins acting as toast master, the toasts and responses thereto being felicitous. Harlow's orchestra furnished acceptable music throughout the evening. Altogether this evening filled out another of the bright pages in the history of the Portsmouth Cavalry.

ON 5 Jan 1889, the PJ published a lengthy article about the preparations for warding off an expected British invasion during War of 1812. With the rest of the plans, the article included a listing of the armament stored in the Gun House.

"The Artillery at the Gun House consists of 3 18-pounders mounted on travelling carriages with harness complete, 4 6-pounders and two brass field pieces mounted, 12 9-pounders, one 32-pounder and 2 24-pounders dismantled, some in good and some in bad condition. 1279 shot deficient for all the guns, allowing 100 rounds to each; 5600 lbs. of powder wanting for the cannon, allowing 100 rounds to each; two tons of grape shot is also wanting. Nothing has been effected by the committee in regard to the organization of the exempts.

"Your committee further report that they have thought it absolutely necessary to have some of the spare cannon at the Gun House mounted, and have accordingly ordered travelling carriages for four of the long sixes to be made, and recommend that the heavy dismantled cannon be carefully examined, and if found fit for service to have them mounted at Fort Washington or elsewhere, as may be deemed most advisable; they also recommend that the 3 18-pounders now at the Gun House be carried to Fort Washington or Fort Sullivan.

"A Gundelow has been procured by the committee and fixed with a travelling rope to pass and repass from the Town to Peirce's Island.

"Your committee are of the opinion that much remains to be done in order that this place should be secure from the attacks of the enemy, who with proper means of annoyance is constantly hovering on our coast; they consider the number of men detached by no means sufficient; that more heavy cannon are wanted; that it would be highly proper to have fire rafts prepared; that a supply of pow-

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PJ 2 April 1892 - Col. William H. Sise, custodian, informed Aldermen of damage done State Arsenal by boys wrecking windows and shutters. Demanded city pay for the damage. Referred city solicitor.

PJ 4 July 1829 -

ARSENAL IN PORTSMOUTH.

On the passage of the resolution to appropriate the sum of \$500 for the purpose of building a wall round the State Arsenal in this town.

Mr Field spoke in favour of the resolution, and explained to the House the nature and situation of the property now deposited in the arsenal. There are 31 pieces of ordnance, with the apparatus belonging to that species of property—about 4000 muskets in excellent order, besides a large quantity of warlike stores—the whole probably of the value of \$50,000. This property it was necessary at times to keep open for the purpose of airing, and a portion may be exposed to loss and injury—the artillery is kept in the yard, to which the decayed fence now remaining affords no protection—and the property of the state is therefore constantly exposed. It was necessary that a fence should be erected, and he thought it true economy to build a substantial and durable one.

[The resolution was laid on the table but subsequently passed.]