



## Places – Sites – Monuments History

### Pickering Square

ME – Bangor – Water Street x Broad Street x Union Street

Name: Pickering Square

What: Open market square

1875 Location: Bordered by Water Street x Broad Street x Union Street adjacent to the Kenduskeag Stream.

2016 Location: Merchants Plaza x Broad Street x Middle Street

Town: Bangor

State: Maine

Map and Lot Numbers: Map 42 – Lot 199

Map: Stoner 1875 – Pickering Square

GPS (Global Positioning System) Latitude, Longitude: 44.799757, -68.771017

Named for: George Washington Pickering (1799-1876)

"Squares were located strategically around the city. These open commercial spaces, usually located at street intersections, allowed men driving horses and wagons to maneuver easily with their cargoes. Mercantile Square was one of four such spaces linked together running roughly parallel to Main Street and the Kenduskeag Stream. In order, they were West Market Square, Mercantile Square, Pickering Square and Hay Market Square." - Reilly, Wayne. *Hidden History of Bangor: From Lumbering Days to the Progressive Era* (The History Press, 2013) 70.

"Bangor is the only city in the State as far as we know that has an out door market six days in the week. This market place is in Pickering square a little off from Main street. The farmers and gardeners from the country adjacent begin to come in as early as three o clock in the morning in summer, and by seven or eight o clock there are several rows of heavily loaded market wagons lined up in regular and systematic order. The number of market teams varies from day to day, usually from fifty to seventy five, but occasionally the number reaches one hundred and fifty. Quite a number of these teams are presided over by women and they are as alert and business like as the men.

The produce displayed for sale by these country merchants is always fresh and, taken together makes a fine display. In addition to the products of the garden, poultry, eggs and butter are brought in liberal quantities. Here hundreds of prudent housewives make their daily purchases, market men replenish their stores, and dealers ever stand ready to take any surplus with which to supply their urban and out of town customers. The sale is generally brisk, and by noon the market is clear of country teams. A considerable portion of the produce sold in this market is shipped to other points, principally to Bar Harbor.

From two reports received from Bangor we gather the following items: Cabbages raised, 2,000 heads; squashes, one half ton; strawberries, 2,800 quarts; gooseberries, 200 quarts; ears of corn,

500 dozen; early potatoes, 50 bushels; turnips, 100 bushels; carrots, 100 bushels; cucumbers, 200 bushels..." -

*Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1904* (Kennebec Journal Print, 1905) 152.

Part of the square was razed in the 1960s during urban renewal.

See: "Bangor eyes historic overhaul of Pickering Square" by Nick McCrea, Bangor Daily News site, 04/05/2016, Accessed online 05/01/2016;  
<http://bangordailynews.com/2016/04/05/news/bangor/bangor-councilors-consider-major-overhaul-of-downtown-pickering-square/>

The square suffered a fire on March 29, 1891. It had apparently started in the G.W. Merrill Furniture Company building where upholstering took place, which provided easily ignited material. The blaze was major, but local fireman put it out before it managed to spread.

George Washington Pickering (1799-1876) and his wife, Mary (Hammond) Partridge (1819-1881)(widow of N.S. Partridge), a prominent local merchant and President of the Kenduskeag Bank (incorporated 1847). His maternal grandfather Jacob Dennett was one of the original settlers of Bangor, part of a group which arrived in 1771. Pickering was also the 12th Mayor of Bangor (1853-54), and Vice President of the Bangor Theological Seminary. Pickering Square in Downtown Bangor is named for him. According to historian James Vickery he "was called the best businessman in Bangor by his contemporaries."

G.W. Pickering opened a variety store on the west side of Market Square in 1821 and rose to become Mayor of Bangor 1855-1856 or 1853-1854 and Vice President of Bangor Theological Seminary.

The Adams-Pickering Block, named for G.W., was designed by architect George W. Orff (1836-), it is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, based on architectural significance. It is unusual in having an entirely granite facade with cast-iron trim. Its mansard roof is faced with Maine slate -corner of Main and Middle Streets - 1872 - #74000184