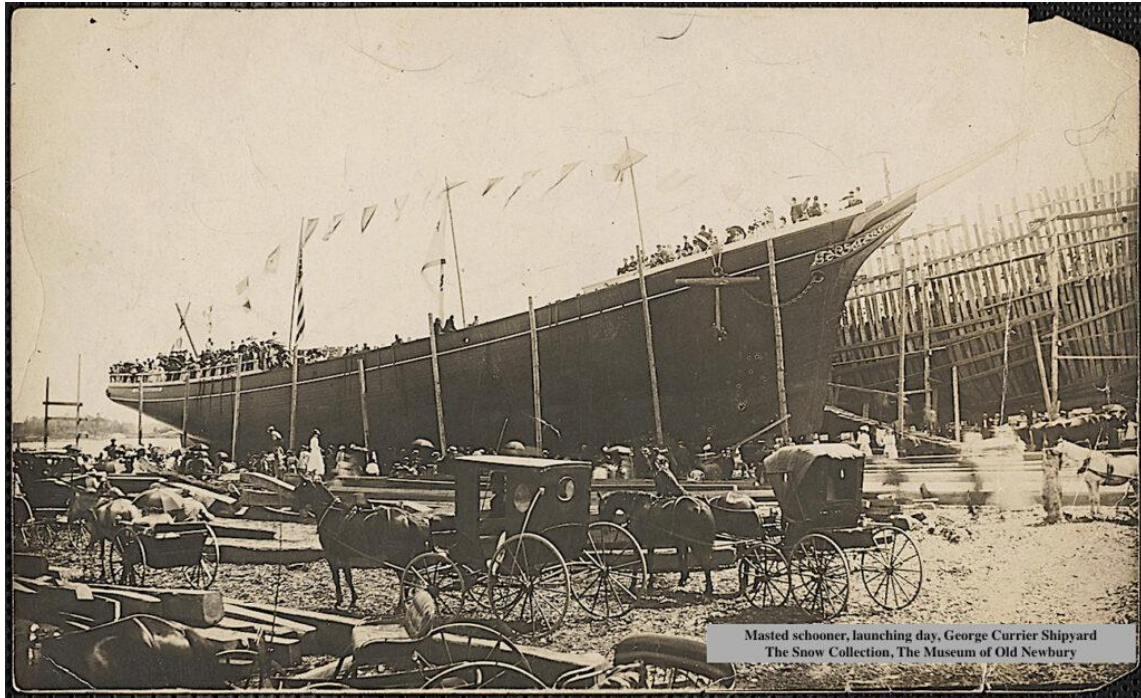


The Currier-Townsend Shipyard

The Shipyard at the foot of Ashland Street

Many ship builders occupied the shipyard at the foot of Ashland Street until the decline of ship building in Newburyport.



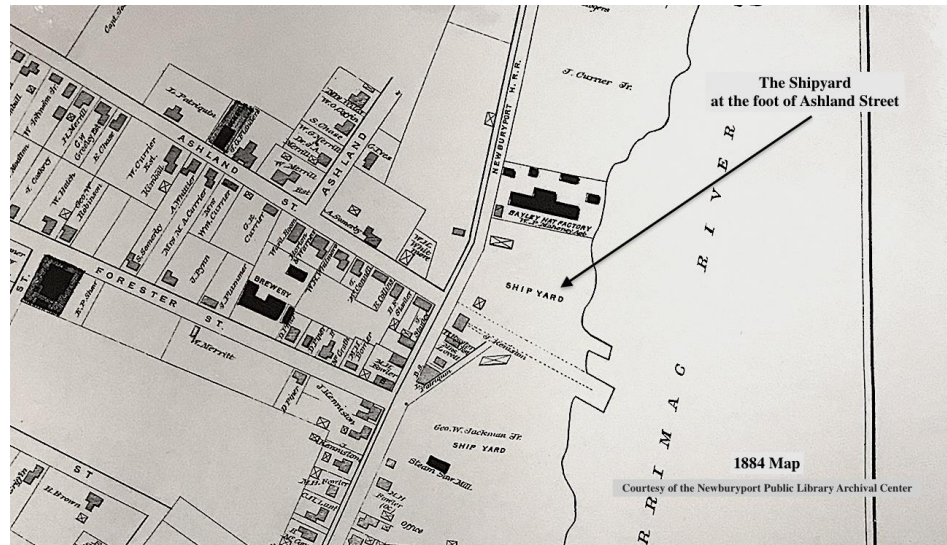
Master schooner, launching day, George Currier Shipyard,
The Snow Collection, The Museum of Old Newbury

The Shipyard

In 1843, William Currier and James L. Townsend formed a partnership and established a shipyard at the foot of Ashland Street. They repaired the wharf already there and put in three launching ways in order to build three vessels at a time. The partners built the largest workshop building of any of the other yard in the city.

In the fifteen years that they were together, the team of Currier and Townsend constructed fifty-one vessels. Only a handful of the vessels were built for local owners, the remaining going to New York and elsewhere. In 1853, the swift clipper ship the Drednought was built here and went on to set a record for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic. In 1860 this vessel made the voyage from New York to England in an unequalled sailing time of nine days and thirteen hours. There is a stone monument today at the base of Ashland and Merrimac

streets that notes this famous achievement. The Dreadnought was recognized at sea by a red cross on her foretopsail. Because of the way the ship's captain, Captain Samuels commanded the vessel, the Dreadnought was known as "The Wild Boat of the Atlantic."



1884 Map, courtesy of the Newburyport Public Library Archival Center



4 mast schooner, George Currier Shipyard, c. 1890, The Snow Collection, The Museum of Old Newbury

The Dreadnought

Unfortunately Currier and Townsend underestimated the cost of building the Dreadnought, 1,414 tons and 210 feet in length. Although their business continued to sink into debt because of the cost of building the ship, the Dreadnought became one of the greatest ships to have

A number of shipbuilders occupied shipyard at the foot of Ashland Street. These builders were, at various times: Currier and Townsend, George E. Currier and Co., Elisha Briggs, Currier and McKay, W. C. Currier, Colby & Lunt, Charles H. Currier and Co., and W. S. Currier.





The Dreadnought
From the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

The Dreadnought, the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland