Why the Greenhouse Motif? A Short History of Horticulture in Brighton-Allston

William Marchione
A large transient element
Drinking
Gambling
Carousing
Immoral behavior
Cattle stampedes
Reckless driving
Poor roads
Air & water pollution
Epidemic diseases
Reverend Frederic A. Whitney  Brighton’s First Church (Unitarian)
Brighton’s “Cultivating Gentlemen”
Bellvue Estate, the residence of Samuel Wyllys Pomeroy, one of the leading “Cultivating Gentlemen” of Massachusetts
The Gorham Parsons Estate, on Faneuil Street
The Brighton Fair & Cattle Shows, 1816-1835
In 1816, the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture picked Brighton as the site of its annual fair and cattle show. The land, now the site of the Winship School, was donated by Abiel Winship.
Both Pomeroy and Parsons were early leaders of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture---Pomeroy serving as First Vice President from 1813 to 1823; Parsons as Recording Secretary from 1823 to 1833.
In 1818, the MSPA built an exhibition hall on the fairgrounds, known as Agricultural Hall. Here every October until 1835, the first regular state fair in Massachusetts was held.
The Winship School, dating from 1899, atop Agricultural Hill
Agricultural Hall, which was moved from the crest of Agricultural Hill, into Brighton Center in the 1840s, and was converted into a hotel, one of some 20 hotels that accommodated the drovers, cattle dealers and farmers who visited the Brighton Cattle Market on a weekly basis.
Agricultural Hall still exists. In the early 1840s it was moved to Brighton Center and converted into a hotel to accommodate patrons of the burgeoning cattle trade. It is the oldest building in Brighton Center.
The Sparhawk Homestead, dating from 1802, center of the largest estate in Brighton
Edward Corey Sparhawk
The Winship Mansion, built in 1780, sat on the site of the Brighton Police Station
Captain Jonathan Winship, 1778-1849
Boston, October 20th, 1819,

RECEIVED of Jon. Winship, One hundred Dollars for the Thirteenth assessment on Ten __ Shares in the BOSTON AND ROXBURY MILL CORPORATION.

Geo. Boothue, Treasurer of Boston and Roxbury Mill Corporation.
The first station on Boston & Worcester Railroad outside the city was Brighton Station in Winship’s Gardens. The railroad carried many more head of cattle to Brighton from western locations than it did passengers from Boston but it also helped promote the success of Winship’s Gardens.
NOTE:

This large and valuable estate will be sold at Public Auction on Saturday June 14th at 3 1/2 o'clock P.M. It is situated on the line of the Boston and Worcester Rail Road, and the Western Avenue (or Mill Dam) leading from Boston. It is 1 1/2 Miles from Mt. Auburn and Cambridge Colleges, and 2 Miles from Brookline, Newton Corner and Watertown. The soil is of superior Quality, and in a high state of cultivation. Persons anxious of obtaining a valuable building lot are requested to attend the sale. The proprietors are confident that no superior inducements to purchase have been offered for many years.

Cars will leave the Depot of the Boston and Worcester Rail Road at 3 o'clock P.M. Free Tickets and Plans can be obtained at the Auctioneer...
Edward Augustus Story, Superintendent of Winship’s Gardens, carried on a horticultural business on the site of the former nursery, for the next 35 years.
Early MHS Officers & Councilors

Captain Jonathan Winship, Vice President, 1835-1847; Councillor, 1829-1841

Joseph Breck, President, 1859-1862; Vice President, 1858

William C. Strong, President, 1871-1874; Vice President, 1860-1870; Recording Secretary, 1852-1855

Francis Lyman Winship, Recording Secretary, 1856-1865

Charles H. B. Breck, Vice President, 1876-1879 & 1882-1900
Horticultural Hall, on Tremont Street, dating from 1865, accommodated the Society during the Presidency of William C. Strong.
The Horticulturalists of North Allston
The Abel Rice House, corner of Everett and Holton Streets, built in 1833 by School Master and Strawberry Farmer Abel Rice. The first strawberries introduced into the Boston market were grown here.
The Scott Farm, Everett Street, North Allston, dating from the 1840s
James Lloyd Lafayette Warren of Brighton: “The Father of California Agriculture”
James Lloyd Lafayette Warren, Brighton horticulturalist, Boston businessman, and social reformer: “The Father of California Agriculture”
The Old Tremont Temple Building, the converted Tremont Theater, dating from 1843, included Warren’s Floral Salon.
Visitors to Warren’s Nonantum Vale Gardens included the so-called Great Triumvirate of U.S. Senators:

- Henry Clay of Kentucky
- Daniel Webster of Massachusetts
- John C. Calhoun of South Carolina
Warren visited Ireland during the period of the Potato Famine
In 1839 JLLF Warren joined his friend, the poet William Cullen Bryant, seen here, in helping to found the first antislavery political party in the United States, the Liberty Party.
Broadside advertising the ship “Sweden” on which Warren set sale for California in 1849, during the Gold Rush.
BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY RESIDENCE
FOR SALE.—A valuable Estate, situated in
NONANTUM VALE, BRIGHTON, containing
about ten acres of land, abounding in choice fruit
trees of every description, in fine order; a two story
dwelling house, stable, and outbuildings, in thor-
oughly good repair, with the modern conveniences; a never fail-
ing spring of water. It is retired, and yet within a short
distance from the main road and the railroad. The beau-
tiful scenery, and salubrity of the air, render it one of
the most desirable residences in the vicinity of Boston.
Terms easy. For further particulars inquire of the
proprietors, or of ROBERT FARLEY, 11 State street.
Boston.
Joseph Breck of Brighton: Massachusetts’ Leading Horticulturalist
Joseph Breck, preeminent horticulturalist in Massachusetts, editor of the New England Farmer, founder of Joseph Breck & Son Agricultural Supply House (the Breck Seed Company derives from this enterprise), and President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society from 1859 to 1862
THE
FLOWER-GARDEN;
or,
BRECK’S BOOK OF FLOWERS;
in which are described
all the various hardy herbaceous perennials, annuals, shrubby plants, and evergreen trees, desirable for ornamental purposes,
with directions for their cultivation.

by Joseph Breck,
seedsman and florist, and former editor of the New England Farmer and the Horticultural Register.

BOSTON:
published by John P. Jewett & Company,
Nos. 17 & 19 Cornhill.
1851.
The Breck residence in Brighton’s Oak Square section
Joseph Breck & Sons headquarters in Boston, adjacent to Quincy Market
Illustration from one of the many profusely illustrated catalogs that the Breck firm issued over the years.
Charles H. B. Breck, son and business partner of his father Joseph. The younger Breck served as Vice President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.
Horace Gray: Father of the Boston Public Garden
In the 1830s, Horace Gray established a “grapery” on Nonantum Hill, for the cultivation of grapes under glass. Gray maintained residences in Boston and Brighton. He introduced the first camellias into Massachusetts and helped found the Boston Public Garden.
The Boston Public Garden as it looked in Horace Gray’s time
Horace Gray’s Nursey and Residence (top left) on Nonantum Hill in Brighton. The building in which Gray resided on the Brighton-Newton boundary was later converted into the St. Sebastian’s Country Day School.
St., Sebastian’s Country Day School Building, the converted Gray Mansion
The Horace Gray Residence, Kingston Street, Boston
William Chamberlain Strong: The Horticulturalist as Entrepreneur
Brighton Horticulturalist and entrepreneur William Chamberlain Strong, who bought Gray’s Nursery in 1848---President of the Mass Horticultural Society, 1859-1862
Cultivation of the Grape

By W.C. Strong

Tilton & Co.
Strong also pioneered the ice cutting industry in Brighton, excavating two Ice Cutting ponds (Chandler’s and Strong’s Ponds) in the Nonantum Valley.
The Elliott Nursery
In the 1880s, the Strong property was purchased by William Elliott.
Evergreen Cemetery: A Local Horticultural Legacy
Brighton’s rural-style Evergreen Cemetery, which opened in 1850, promoted and designed by local horticulturalists.
Some Lesser Horticultural Luminaries
Samuel Jackson Nursery on Chestnut Hill Avenue, opposite the present day Wallingford Road intersection
Samuel Jackson and his twin brother Nathaniel also owned and operated a nearby slaughterhouse, almost certainly a source of animal fertilizer for the nursery.
The Samuel Jackson House
Samuel Jackson’s son, William Jackson, a prominent engineer who designed the Harvard Bridge across the Charles River, and William Jackson Avenue, which runs through the grounds of the former nursery, was named in his honor.
The Harvard Bridge, Charles River
Brackett Estate Greenhouse, Washington Hill, west of Oak Square, built by horticultural enthusiast, Dexter H. Brackett, about 1880
The De Luco Nursery, Saybrook Street
The Holbrow Nursery; The Last of Brighton’s Large-scale Horticultural Enterprises
Holbrow house, greenhouses, and flower Shop, Tremont St., Brighton
Finis