

FORM B - Building

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Map and Lot # 235 1 USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number 64, 201

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)

Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2x5" black and white only) Label photo on back with town and property address. Record film roll and negative numbers here on form. Staple photo to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

Roll Negative(s)

Address 227 Boston Road
Historic Name Whitney, Deacon Joshua House
Uses: Present Residential, agricultural
Original Residential
Date of Construction c. 1706

Source Previous GHS deed research

Style/Form Colonial

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood clapboard

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure

19th c. Barn, stone walls, post and rail fences

Major Alterations (with dates)

Restored, c. ??

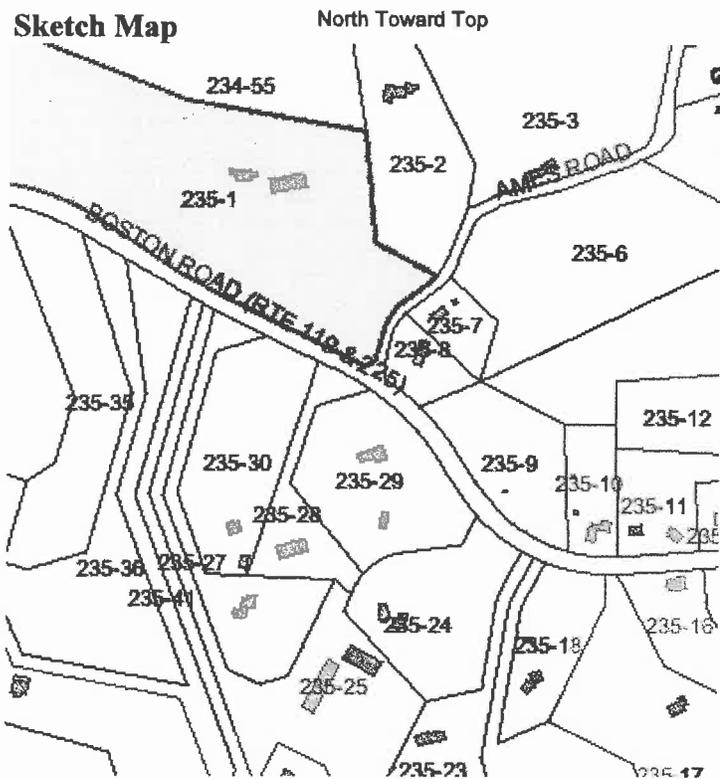
Condition Excellent

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 17

Setting Rural

Sketch Map



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

- * The Colonial style house is built on a side gambrel 5x2-bay plan of 2 1/2 stories with a 2-story ell on the east side
- * The façade of the main block has symmetrical fenestration and a center entry flanked by sidelights; secondary entries are in the south and east sides of the ell; ornament consists of the trim around the center entry, molded window trim and corner boards; windows are 12/12 double-hung sash in the main block and smaller 6/6 sash in the ell; the large brick chimney occupies the center of the roof ridge
- * The detached 19th century barn, measuring approximately 30'x70', is a banked gable-roofed form oriented parallel to the road with the main vehicle entry on the west gable end; an octagonal wood ventilator with octahedral roof and weathervane occupies the center of the roof ridge; windows include the transom over the main entry, a fixed 6-pane sash in the west gable peak, 5 double hung 6/6 sash on the south elevation as well as a fixed 6-pane sash lighting the middle of the second story, paired fixed 6-pane sashes near the west end of the first story and a fixed 6-pane sash lighting an enclosed section of the ground level; additional openings include three vents near the west end of the first story and four arched openings for vehicle access or storage at the ground level; walls are clad in vertical boards, the foundation is split granite slabs and the roof is clad in asphalt shingles.
- * Landscape elements include split granite retaining walls on both sides of the barn, post and rail fences enclosing cow pasture, open fields covering much of the 17 acre parcel; the house, barn and surrounding agricultural landscape are in excellent condition and are among the older and more well-preserved Colonial resources in the town.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

see continuation sheets

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.

The plaque on the house at 227 Boston Road, placed in 1954 by the GHS describes the original owner and reads "Here lived /Deacon Joshua Whitney/Pioneer settler of Groton 1662/Born Watertown, July 15, 1635/Died Groton, August 7, 1719/Buried in Old Groton Cemetery". Groton's 19th century historian Caleb Butler, quoting town records, places Whitney on the list of the town's original proprietors with an 8 acre right. Virginia May's deed research points out that the property was sold to a potential relative (but not a son) William Whitney in 1713, then to Jonathan Hubbard Jr. in 1720 with 40 acres of upland, lowland, meadow and pasture, mansion house, corn house, mill house, barn, orchard, 70 acre pasture, woodland and mowing on the south side of Boston Road and clay pits on the current neighboring golf course. The house was later sold to John Bulkley in 1733 and then from Abel Lawrence of Salem to Abel Prescott in 1803. Tax records from 1830 list Abel Prescott as the owner of \$4500 in real property, a larger than average valuation. The 1832 Butler map depicts Abel Prescott as the owner and Butler's field notes describe a lane to the house, (probably referring to the current long driveway), a "bevel roof", two stories, one chimney and five windows across the façade. He also notes that the house is old. The 1847 Butler and 1854 Walling maps show J. Eaton at this site. Tax records from 1847 list Joshua Eaton as the owner of \$5400 in real property, also a high valuation. This is confirmed by the Non-population Census Schedules from 1850. The state census from 1855 reveals that Mr. Eaton was a 63 year-old yeoman married to Matilda with a daughter and two Irish laborers as boarders. The 1875 atlas depicts Andrew Robbins as the owner. Tax records show he owned 8 farms in Groton, the old Eaton Farm among them which contained 85 of his total of 216 + acres, much larger than average. He also owned a store, soapstone quarry and related buildings and sold 11,000 gallons of milk from his 32-cow herd, making him a wealthy man compared to his neighbors. Non-population Census Schedules from 1880 show he had 600 apple trees which may refer to the existing orchard behind or north of the house. Mr. Robbins remained here until at

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

1832, 1847 Butler maps and field notes; 1875 Beers Atlas; 1856 Walling map; 1939 WPA map; Previous GHS research; 1889 Walker atlas; May, "Groton Houses", p. 123; Butler, "History of the Town of Groton, Massachusetts", pp. 27, 444; 1930 map of Groton; WWW.Olmsted.org (Olmsted Online Research Guide); Groton Tax Records, 1830-1889; State Census, 1855, 1865; Library of Congress, HABS Photo Collection; Non-population Census Schedules;

**** All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- 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

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Groton

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Area(s)

Form No.

227 Boston Road Historical Narrative, Continued

least 1889 when resident directories list him as a farmer and tax records show he continued to own several farms and a very large herd of around 43 cows. A photo from this period reproduced in May's "Groton Houses" depicts two outbuildings in the front yard which may be the corn house and mill house listed in her deed research. By 1930, the occupant was Phillips Barry (also spelled Phillip Berry), who GHS researchers describe as a historian and who may be the well known New England folklorist, collector of American ballads and folk music. Boston resident directories indicate he lived part of the year on Massachusetts Avenue in that city but give no occupation. The Olmsted Research Guide Online suggest he hired the landscape architecture firm to do design work on his Groton estate but does not specify the work. Land surrounding the farm in 1939 was planted in hay and used as pasture according to WPA maps from that year. The property was the subject of Historic American Building Survey photographs in the 1941 which are visible on the Library of Congress website. The house and barn are well preserved and are highly significant for their associations with early Groton history. The corn house and mill house are no longer extant.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Area(s)

Form No.

227 Boston Road



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

227 Boston Road



Massachusetts Historical Commission

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Community Groton
Property Address
227 Boston Road

Area(s)

Form No.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible X

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: Sanford Johnson

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

The Colonial Style Deacon Joshua Whitney House at 227 Boston Road is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. It was the home of an original Groton settler, Joshua Whitney, at the time of construction c. 1707 and later, William Whitney, a farmer and descendant of the original owner. The building's associations with an original settler and historic agricultural activity in Groton establishes its significance under Criterion A. The house was occupied by the farmers Abel Prescott and Joshua Eaton in the mid 19th century and was the subject of Historic American Building Survey photographs in the 1941. The stout center brick chimney, gambrel/saltbox roof and simple ornament are typical of First Period residential construction which is rare in Groton, making the property eligible under Criterion C. The building retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.