

# FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # 108 5 USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number 93, 199, 200, 915

Town Groton  
Place (neighborhood or village)

## Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2"x5" 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 152 Broadmeadow Road  
Historic Name Farnsworth, James House  
Uses: Present Residential  
Original Residential, agricultural  
Date of Construction c. 1820

Source Architectural style, 1832 Butler map

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood clapboard

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure  
2 detached barns; hexagonal gazebo

Major Alterations (with dates)

Bay window added c. 1910; east porch, c. 1910; rear additions, 19th century

Condition Good

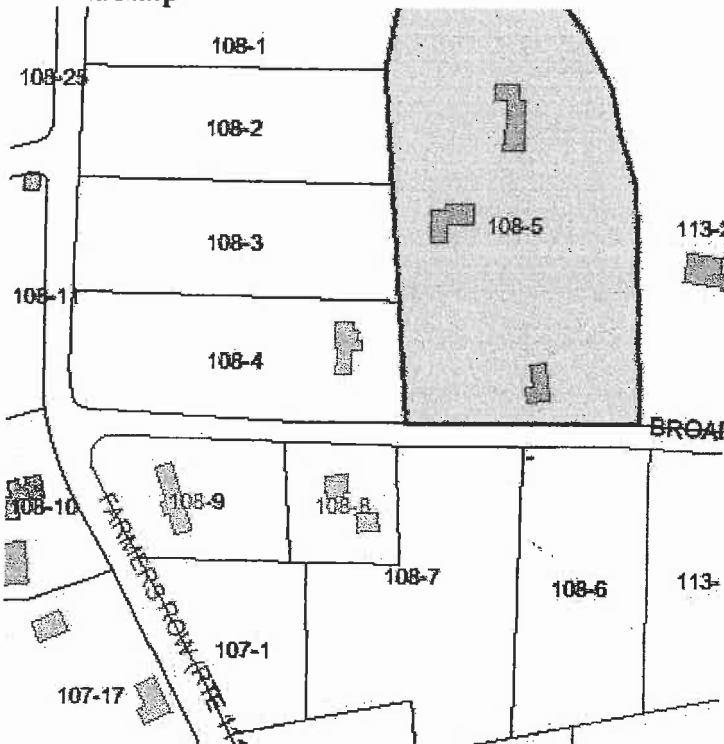
Moved no  yes  Date

Acreage 7.48

Setting Rural

## Sketch Map

North Toward Top



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 Farnsworth House is a five by three-bay, two and one-half-story, side-gabled Federal style design with a two-story rear ell and a flat-roofed c. 1910 open porch supported by Doric columns
- \* Design elements include the symmetrical fenestration in the façade, pedimented center entry porch with Doric columns, molded eave trim with gable returns and corner boards
- \* Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with shutter and storm windows; a c. 1910 three-sided bay window on the west elevation has Queen Anne windows in the transom, pilasters and tripartite sash
- \* The center entry has flanking pilasters
- \* Two brick chimneys in the main block have inlaid panels; two chimneys in the rear ell are narrower and taller than the main stacks
- \* The house is in good condition and retains many historic architectural features.
- \* The hexagonal gazebo is located behind the east porch and has classically derived eave trim and pilasters; the bell shaped roof is clad in metal
- \* Barns exist in the rear of the parcel and are not easily visible from the road but appear to have built in the 19th or early 20th century based on the wood clapboard exteriors and gambrel roof forms

### 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 house at 152 Broadmeadow Street was built c. 1810 based on the architectural details and its appearance on the 1829 Butler Map. The initial owner was James Farnsworth (b. 1784) from c. 1820-c. 1850 whose property, according to tax records from 1830 and 1847 was valued at \$3,500 and \$7,000 respectively, a greater than average sum. Non-population Census Schedules from 1850 point out that he owned 300 acres and a farm worth \$10,000, all much greater than average. Butler's field notes for his 1832 map describe a house of two stories with five windows across the front. Subsequent owners were M. Farnsworth in 1856, I. M. Mansur in 1875 who kept two horses, 12 cows, and two carriages on his 43 acre property according to tax records; Prescott Lawrence in 1889 who owned more than one house in town, had \$90,000 in cash, 20 horses and \$5,000 in carriages (he was listed in the 1888 resident directory as a resident of Broadmeadow Road but no occupation was given him); and Amory Lawrence (c. 1890-1912) who donated the Lawrence Playground on Main Street to the town in 1900, and William P. Wharton (1912-1976). Mr. Wharton was the son of William F. Wharton, a Harvard educated lawyer (classes of 1870, 1873), member of the state house of representatives, assistant secretary of state under President Harrison and part time resident of 108 Pleasant Street (The Elms, MHC #87) where the younger Wharton lived for a time. William P. Wharton attended the Groton School and Harvard University (a classmate of Franklin Roosevelt), founded the New England Forestry Foundation, served as president of the Massachusetts Forest and Park Association, donated over 700 acres that became Groton's Wharton Plantation, served as Director of the Audubon Society, served on the board of selectman from 1921 - 1924, the planning board in 1947, town forest committee in 1923 and was for a time Groton's oldest resident. His influence and experience were such that in 1932, he toured the Everglades by airplane, boat and blimp with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. in order to assist the National Park Service in ascertaining the practicability of forming the area into a national park. Mr. Wharton's second wife was Elizabeth Wiggin, a

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

Previous GHS Research; GPL Local History Collection, Wm. F. Wharton File; Sawyer, Helen McCarthy, People and Places of Groton; Barbara Murray, et. al. Groton at 350; Resident Directories, 1918, 1929; Butler maps of 1832 and 1847 and field notes; Walling map of 1856; 1889 Walker atlas; 1939 WPA map; May, Groton Houses, p. 149; Groton Tax Records, 1830-1889; State Census, 1855, 1865; Butler's filed notes, 1828-29; Wharton, William P. Article in the New York Times concerning his participation in forming Everglades National Park. February 6, 1932; 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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**Town**

Groton

**Property Address****Area(s)****Form No.****152 Broadmeadow Road****Historical Narrative**

graduate of Groton's Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture (located at 14 Main Street MHC#20), founder of the Groton Garden Club and creator of well-known gardens on the property, know as Five Oaks Farm. The Whartons farmed the land, raising dairy cows and fruit trees through much of the mid 20th century. Mr. Wharton was also active in ornithology, banding birds he caught on his farm. Mr. Wharton was listed as a farmer in the 1918 resident directory although he was described as a multi millionaire in Groton at 350. It was probably Mr. Wharton who added the open porch on the east side of the house and the bay window on the west. The house is depicted as a farm with hayfields and orchards on the 1939 WPA map. Mr. Wharton bought the house at 169 Broadmeadow in 1912, possibly for his employees.

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Town**  
Groton

**Property Address**

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220 Morrissey Boulevard  
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**Area(s)**

**Form No.**

152 Broadmeadow Road





**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Town**  
Groton

**Property Address**

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
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**Area(s)**

**Form No.**

152 Broadmeadow



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**Town**  
Groton

**Property Address**

**Area(s)**

**Form No.**

152 Broadmeadow



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community Groton

Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Property Address  
152 Broadmeadow 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 Federal Style James Farnsworth House at 152 Broadmeadow Road is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. It was the home of the farmer James Farnsworth and was documented in a cursory manner by Caleb Butler during his field work that formed the basis of his 1832 map of the town. Subsequent owners were members of the Lawrence and Wharton families, both having done a great deal to positively influence the nature of the community through establishing and supporting the Lawrence Academy and by establishing forest preserves in town. The building's associations with historic agricultural and philanthropic activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The symmetrical fenestration, stout center brick chimney and classical ornament are typical of Federal style residential construction in Groton, making the property eligible under Criterion C. The house and barn retain integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.