

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 Lawrence Homestead is comprised of three separately built but attached 2 1/2-story side-gabled blocks oriented parallel
- * The main block of 2 1/2 stories and 5x3 bays was built c. 1797 and demonstrates characteristics of the Federal style including the symmetrical façade, center entry, center brick chimney with corbel and classical detail; ornament includes the molded cornice with dentils at the eave of the façade, gable returns, corner boards, entry surround with fanlight, dentils and pilasters capped by an ornate broken pediment (the entry surround is likely a Colonial Revival addition); windows in the main block are 12/12 double hung sash with hoods except in the second story of the façade where the window trim dies into the cornice
- * Additions made in the late 19th century demonstrate a variety of Victorian details including in the first addition's north wall a clipped gable with dentils above a Palladian window in the side wall and flat-roofed porch supported by colonettes on plinths; the south wall has a variety of multiple pane windows that are mullied in groups of two, three, and four sashes as well as a recessed porch; The second addition has on its north wall a paneled brick chimney along the exterior wall, segmental arched gable ornament, molded cornice and closed gable; the south wall has an overhanging gable covering a multiple sash bay window supported by modillions which in turn overhangs a bay window with paired windows flanked by turned posts and paneled woodwork
- * Stone walls and an iron gate separate the house from the road, lending an estate quality to the building
- * The house is in excellent condition and is one of the higher style Federal designs in the town; the setting is among open fields that provide views from Farmers Row to the woods along the Nashua River; the Victorian additions are in harmony with the

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 Lawrence Homestead was built c. 1797 (a date widely quoted by local historians but of unknown source) for Susanna and deacon Samuel Lawrence on the site of a house built during the late 17th or early 18th century (demolished 1796) for Thomas Tarbell who lost three children to kidnapping at this site by Native Americans on June 20, 1707. Two of the Tarbell children, Zachariah and John who May reports were taken from a cherry tree where they were hiding, returned to Groton in 1739 wearing Native American clothing and having lost their native language despite having been 8 and 12 years old at the time of capture. They traveled overland from Canada, where they had since been married, to visit Groton with an interpreter 32 years after they were taken. Dr. Green notes that the Tarbells had descendants living in St. Regis in the late 1800s. It is presumable that they visited this site. A stone plaque integrated into the stone wall at the road indicates the male children were chiefs of the Caughnawaga Tribe and were among the founders of the town of St. Regis. The sister, Sarah, was placed in a convent after her capture where she became the first American nun. Samuel Lawrence was a veteran of the Battle of Bunker Hill, justice of the peace, founder and trustee of the Groton Academy and the father of Amos, William and Abbott Lawrence, prominent Groton natives and Boston importers, manufacturers of domestic goods, Lowell industrialists and founders of textile mills in the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts which was named for Abbott, later a U.S. senator and Whig V.P. candidate, founder in 1847 of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University and Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The brothers' donations to their alma mater, Groton Academy, were the impetus for changing the name in 1846 to The Lawrence Academy at Groton. Amos was also involved in the founding of Massachusetts General Hospital in 1811 and is listed in Non-population Census Schedules as the owner fo 230 acres. Another son, Luther, was elected mayor of Lowell and may have owned the house in 1830 as tax valuations show he had \$6,000 in real property. Samuel died in 1827 and Susanna in 1845. In 1828, Caleb Butler's field notes

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

Frank, p. 381; Butler, pp. 229, 247, 253, 276-8; Tercentenary Booklet, p. 89; 1832, 1847 Butler maps and field notes; 1875 Beers Atlas; 1889 Walker Atlas; 1856 Walling map; 1939 WPA Map; Previous research by GHS; Stone, p. 692; Smith, Faith. "Farmers Row in Groton, Massachusetts: The Olmsted Firm's Influence on a Neighborhood from 1884-1894". Unpublished MS, 1999; Kelleher, Tom. "Welfare and Workfare in 1830s New England: Jails, Prisons, Work Houses and Poor Farms". Old Sturbridge Village Research Paper, 1997; Green, Vol. 3, p. 239; 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

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

Town

Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

44 Farmers Row

Historical Narrative

for his map of 1832 show the house in its current form and painted white. The Butler map of 1847 depicts this property as the Lawrence Mansion and tax records from that year show that Samuel's oldest living son, William Lawrence of Boston owned \$8,000 in real property that included a house and barn, probably referring to this residence. The Walling map of 1856 shows this as the Lawrence Place. By 1875, T. L. Motley is depicted as the occupant but not the owner, who was James Lawrence according to the Beers atlas and to research by landscape historian Faith Smith. James was Abbott and Katherine Lawrence's son and occupied the house from c. 1876, when he enlarged it with the design help of architect John Hubbard Sturgis, to at least 1889 according to Faith Smith and the Walker atlas which also shows that he owned the neighboring houses at 24 and 2 Farmers Row as well as the parcel across the road. Mr. Lawrence was a Harvard Law School graduate, employee of A. and A. Lawrence and Co. in Boston, cousin of Groton School founder Endicott Peabody and like him had a brief relationship with the Frederick Law Olmsted landscape architecture firm as they attempted to procure for both clients a view to the Nashua River and hills beyond. Tax records show he had \$262,000 in stocks and bonds, \$10,000 in furniture, among other possessions, all worth a vast amount beyond normalcy for a Groton resident. Based on previous research by the GHS, he was responsible for enlarging the house with the Victorian additions in 1876 designed by architect John Hubbard Sturgis. The 1939 WPA map depicts the property as a farm planted in timber, hay, gardens and pasture. Around this time, the house was owned by Carl A. P. Lawrence, an officer in the Groton Leatherboard Company in West Groton. Mr. Taisey was 1977 owner. A stone plaque built into the fence along the road commemorates the 1707 abduction of the Tarbell children by Native Americans.

Bibliography

Samuel Lawrence declaration of participation in the Battle of Bunker Hill, Boston Patriot & Gazette, June 13, 1818; Tarbell children return to Groton 32 years after capture by Native Americans. New England Weekly Journal. April 10, 1739; May, "Plantation", p. 9.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Groton

Property Address

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

Area(s)

Form No.

44 Farmers Row



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

44 Farmers Row

Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community Groton

Property Address

44 Farmers Row

Massachusetts Archives Building

220 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)
X

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 X

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 and Victorian Eclectic Style Lawrence Homestead at 44 Farmers Row is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The house was built c. 1797 (a date widely quoted by local historians but of unknown source) for Susanna and deacon Samuel Lawrence on the site of a house built during the late 17th or early 18th century (demolished 1796) for Thomas Tarbell who lost three children to kidnapping at this site by Native Americans on June 20, 1707. Two of the Tarbell children, Zachariah and John who historian Virginia May reports were taken from a cherry tree where they were hiding, returned to Groton in 1739 wearing Native American clothing and having lost their native language despite having been 8 and 12 years old at the time of capture. They traveled overland from Canada, where they had since been married, to visit Groton with an interpreter 32 years after they were taken. Dr. Green notes that the Tarbells had descendants living in St. Regis in the late 1800s. It is presumable that they visited this site in 1739. Samuel Lawrence was a veteran of the Battle of Bunker Hill, justice of the peace, founder and trustee of the Groton Academy and the father of Amos, William and Abbott Lawrence, prominent philanthropists, Groton natives and Boston importers, manufacturers of domestic goods, Lowell industrialists and founders of textile mills in the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts which was named for Abbott, later a U.S. senator and Whig V.P. candidate, founder in 1847 of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University and Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The brothers' donations to their alma mater, Groton Academy, were the impetus for changing the name in 1846 to The Lawrence Academy at Groton. The building's associations with historic military, agricultural and civic activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the house with its Federal style main block combined with architect-designed Victorian additions are unique in residential construction in Groton making the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.