Discover Your Home’s History!

Marilyn Fenollosa
Lexington Historical Commission
September 22, 2018
Discover Your Home’s History!
Historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov

Town of Lexington, Massachusetts

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Architectural Style Guide
Area Summaries
Area Surveys
Bibliography
Building Plans
Historic Property Forms
Historical Period Summaries
History of Municipal Buildings
Interactive Map of Properties
Maps c. 1640 - 1906
Massachusetts Archives Building Plans List

Home » Boards » Historical Commission

Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey

See our new interactive map of historical properties with links to survey forms.

This architectural and historical overview of the Town of Lexington and its neighborhoods includes:

- All of Lexington's historical property survey forms, by address
- Area survey forms
- Guide to architectural styles, with Lexington examples
- Historic maps of Lexington to orient you
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- Bibliography of the many resources available to you — most of which are readily accessible at Cary Library.

The Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey project was funded with Community Preservation Act funds. The Lexington Historical Commission is grateful for the support that the Town has shown in enabling this important project.
The Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey

of the

Lexington Historical Commission

Revised August, 2018

This is the Master Index to all properties included on Lexington’s Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (the “Inventory”).

The Master Index contains an alphabetical listing of all properties included on the Inventory, either by Area or street name. Many of the buildings are documented on individual building forms ("B" Forms) that describe their historical and/or architectural significance; these may be viewed at http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/property-survey-forms/scanned_surveys_menu.htm. Others are included as buildings that contribute to the historical and/or architectural significance of a group of buildings described on an Area form ("A" form; see http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/area-survey-forms/scanned_area_surveys.htm); these buildings are individually listed on Data Sheets included with the appropriate Area form (a list of Areas is included in the following pages, and a map identifying Area locations is provided at http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/lexmaps/Area_Locator.pdf) Structures and objects included on the Inventory are at http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/objects-structures/objects_structures_menu.htm.
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Historic Property Forms

This page indexes all of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's "Form B - Building" records for Lexington buildings. These records include information on:

- the historic name of the building, if one is known
- original and current use and ownership
- construction date
- architect (if known) and architectural style.

Browse historic property forms listed alphabetically by street name

See historic property forms for street names beginning with:

A  H  O  V
B  I  P  W
C  J  Q  X
FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

street Name: Cutler Farmhouse

SKETCH MAP
Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.

Recorded by Nancy S. Searles
Organization: Lexington Historical Commission
Date: February, 1984

DESCRIPTION:
Source: John Coles and Associates

Style: Federal

Architect

Exterior wall fabric: clapboard

Outbuildings: attached garage

Major alterations (with dates) 1811
(1857): roof raised and rear addition.
East porch, bracketed door hood (1874)

Moved

Date

Approx. acreage: 2501 ft²

Setting: Screened from street with continual traffic by a row of hemlocks; surrounded by much newer houses built on the farmland formerly associated with this house.
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

Built c. 1804, the Cutler farmhouse is one of the remaining Federal farmhouses along the old Cambridge-Concord Turnpike, now Concord Avenue. Very little of the original Federal finishes remain; however. On the exterior only the five-bay facade and the two end chimneys of the central portion date from the Federal period. On the interior, the only Federal elements are the "ribbed molded" chair rail and cornice in the west front parlor; the filled holes on the stair treads indicating the original balusters were slender, square in

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The land on which this house is located was owned in the eighteenth century by Ebenezer White. After his death, it was sold in about 1789 to a Joseph Underwood who, in turn, sold the lot to his son Joseph Jr. in 1804. The house was apparently built about this time, for the deed refers to Joseph Underwood Jr.'s "new house." Further corroboration is supplied by the Middlesex County Commissioners records for 1804 which, in describing the Cambridge-Concord Turnpike built that year (the present Concord Avenue), mention "the new house of Joseph Underwood, Jr." (Burgess 1965:84-85). This house was apparently a two-story Federal farmhouse, five bays wide, one room deep, with brick ends, two end chimneys, either a hip or a gable roof, and perhaps an attached shed at the east end of the back (John F. Cole to Mr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Nussdorfer, March 20, 1969).

The part of Ebenezer White's estate south of present Concord Avenue was sold in 1790 to Thomas Cutler who, in turn, sold it in 1802 to his son Nathaniel. The latter lived in the old White farmhouse (south of the present 502 Concord Avenue) until 1822 when he purchased Joseph Underwood Jr.'s house from Underwood relatives. Nathaniel Cutler (1773-1849) was a prosperous farmer, raising and selling large quantities of herbs and dealing in lumber. He was also an important figure in town affairs, serving as moderator, selectman, district school committee man, surveyor of highways, overseer of the poor, surveyor of lumber, and a member of various special town committees. In 1837 the west ell was apparently added to the house, for the assessors' records mention "sheds and

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)


Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

section, and set on the diagonal; and the original brick ends, visible in the attic and the west ell basement. The house has had many additions or alterations; the west ell was added in 1837, the bracketed hood over the front door and the east porch during an extensive 1874 remodeling (the trellis over the front door is undoubtedly a later addition); and the garage before 1923.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

betterments on the house" (Burgess 1965:85), and in 1842 Nathaniel Cutler deeded the farm to his son Thomas in return for the right to live in the west ell. The ell has subsequently almost always been occupied by a separate household; it is now a rental apartment.

Thomas Cutler (1801-1890) was also a successful farmer, but not active in town affairs. He ran the farm with his son Thomas Brewett Cutler (1830-1879); under the latter the farm began to specialize in apples and milk and its holdings were increased, especially in the area north of Shada and east of Spring streets, in what is now the Woodhaven area (1879 map). In 1876 the original house was completely remodeled; the roof was raised, the house was made two rooms deep, the brick ends covered with clapboards, and the bracketed front doorway and east porch added. Thomas E. Cutler died in 1876 and his inventory lists the rooms then existing in the main house: kitchen, dining room, sitting room (east front), front hall, parlor (west front), parlor chamber, chamber over front hall, sitting room chamber, bath room, dining room chamber, north chamber, attic, workmen's chamber, washroom (Burgess 1964:9-9). This inventory also mentions improvements to a barn and outbuildings; the former, at least, was located on the south side of Concord Avenue (site of present 502 Concord Avenue). Thomas Cutler died in 1890 and his inventory lists the house, barn, and three outbuildings (Burgess 1965:84).

Thomas Cutler left the 150 acre farm to his son's widow and children. It was purchased in 1890 by Clarence R. Cutler (1869-1933), a son of Thomas E. Cutler. Like his great-grandfather, Clarence Cutler was very active in town affairs, serving as a town meeting member, on the finance committee, planning board, as a fence viewer, and a delegate to Republican conventions. He was also a member of the Lexington Grange, Nineteen, Rotary Club, and First Parish Church. During his ownership of the Cutler farm he continued to specialize in apples and milk and many outbuildings were added, all of which have since disappeared: a wagon shed (late 1890s) next to the barn; a summer house (c. 1915) at the Parker pine (see Concord Avenue area form); a cottage (1920) on the east side of the property (site of present 501 Concord Avenue); workmen's housing (before 1930) above the wagon shed (Burgess 1964:1, 1965:85-86). Clarence Cutler apparently wanted the farm to remain in the Cutler family, but he left it to his wife who, on her death in 1936, had left it to a niece, so the farm, which had been owned and operated by the same family for over 150 years, ceased to be owned by the Cutlers. After World War II the Cutler farmland was divided up and sold off for residential developments: Woodhaven in the late 1940s, Benjamin Road in the 1950s, and Five Fields, on the south side of Concord Avenue, in the early 1950s (see Five Fields area form). The Cutler barn and workmen's house were torn down in 1953 as part of the latter development.
FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

FILE

wn. Lexington

dress. 503 Concord Avenue

storic Name. Cutler Farmhouse

e: Present. residential

Original. residential

DESCRIPTION:

te. c. 1804

Source. John Coles and Associates

Style. Federal

Architect

Exterior wall fabric. clapboard

Outbuildings. attached garage

Major alterations (with dates). all

(1827): roof raised and rear addition,

east porch, bracketed door hood (1874)

Moved. Date

Approx. acreage. 22641 ft.²

Setting. Screened from street with

continental traffic by a row of hemlocks;

surrounded by much newer houses built on

the farmland formerly associated with

this house.
Area Surveys

Areas:

- Guide Map of Area Letter Designations
- Area A - Central Business District
- Area B - Battle Green
- Area C - Hancock-Clarke Area
- Area D - Munroe Tavern Historic District
- Area E - East Lexington
- Area F - Woburn Street Area
- Area G - Grant, Fletcher, Sheridan & Sherman Streets
- Area H - Meriam Hill
- Area I - Middle Ridge / Turning Mill
- Area A - Central Business District
- Area B - Battle Green
- Area C - Hancock-Clarke Area
- Area D - Munroe Tavern Historic District
- Area E - East Lexington
- Area F - Woburn Street Area
- Area G - Grant, Fletcher, Sheridan & Sherman Streets
- Area H - Meriam Hill
- Area I - Middle Ridge / Turning Mill
- Area J - Parker Street & Upper Clarke Street
- Area K - Forest Street
- Area L - Raymond Street
- Area M - Winthrop Road
- Area N - Bloomfield Street
- Area O - Munroe Hill
- Area P - Curve Street
- Area Q - Liberty Heights
- Area R - Six Moon Hill
- Area S - Peacock Farm
- Area T - Concord Avenue
- Area U -Five Fields
Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient.)
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Originally the Cambridge-Concord Turnpike, Concord Avenue, except for a short section near Spring street, is still in exactly the same location as it was when built in 1804. It also preserves much of its historic character; although it has been widened and much of it built up since World War II, the section near the site of the Parker pins, shown in the photo, still seems like a country road complete with the stone walls that once bordered it. A number of the farmhouses that were built along the highway in its early years remain, enhancing the sense of an historic roadway.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

The Cambridge-Concord Turnpike is one of the many such turnpikes built in the nation as well as in Massachusetts during the first years of the nineteenth century. Despite opposition from Lexington for reasons unspecified (it is often said that they were against the large sums of money it would cost to build the Turnpike), the Cambridge-Concord Turnpike Association was incorporated in 1803 to build a road between Cambridge and Concord straighter than the circuitous one then existing through Lexington (see Old Stage Street and Ricci's Lane area forms). The Lexington section was laid out on virtually the same route Concord Avenue follows today and was apparently completed in 1804. Two toll gates were erected, one in Cambridge and one in Lincoln, and a system of tolls established, the amount determined by the type of vehicle and size of team or the number of animals driven. The turnpike was not very profitable because it was built in a straight line it went over many hills (as it still does) rather than around them; and thanks to these hills as well as to poor maintenance an early stagecoach line was soon discontinued. In 1828 the stockholders petitioned the county commissioners to make the turnpike a county road. After the county took over some abutters moved their stone walls in as much as 10 feet, reducing the distance between walls to 50 feet in some places, far less than the 66 feet (4 rods) required by the turnpike. (A drawing of the Parker pins showing Concord Avenue before 1864 indicates that it was much narrower than 50 feet, but this may be the result of artistic license (Weiss 1864, facing 261). Concord Avenue has since been widened, most recently in the early 1960s to make the pavement 30 feet wide, not too much different from the 22 feet required for the original turnpike.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Once the turnpike was built, it became a locus for new farmhouses, many of which are still standing. On Concord Avenue between the Belmont line and Spring Street, of the seven houses shown on the 1830 map, five are still there; of the 12 on the 1850 map, eight still exist and one has been reconstructed (see sketch map and relevant building forms.) A schoolhouse located by 1853 on the lot now 425 Concord Avenue has been moved and is now part of a house on Lincoln Street (see 370 Lincoln Street form). The structures that no longer remain are almost all in the section from Spring Street west, an area that has been seriously disrupted in the twentieth century by the building of the Charles River Reservoir in 1897, Route 2 in 1933, Route 128 in 1953, and the rebuilding of Route 2 in the early 1960s. The noted Pinney/Weber/Smith barn, for example, was on land now occupied by Barlow Corporation, and the site of the Ninacda Tavern, which was at the corner of Spring Street and old Concord Avenue and burned in 1915, is now under Route 2. Highway construction has also altered the course of Concord Avenue. When Route 2 was built, it followed the course of the old turnpike from the Lincoln line to a point about midway between Spring and Old Shade streets, just west of the present Benjamin Road; Route 2 then swung slightly north and Concord Avenue began as a fork off the highway. When Route 2 was rebuilt in the early 1960s, it was connected to Concord Avenue by access ramps and Concord Avenue itself was turned to run southwest, intersecting Spring Street opposite the Parker homestead.

Of all the historic personalities who have lived in the vicinity of Concord Avenue, undoubtedly the most famous are the Parkers: Captain John, commander of the Minutemen in their historic confrontation with the British on the Lexington Green on April 19, 1775, and his grandson Theodore, the transcendentalist, reformer, and abolitionist (see 187 Spring Street and Parker monument forms). Theodore Parker was apparently responsible for saving a very tall double-headed pine that stood on a high point of Concord Avenue near the present intersections with Field and Benjamin roads (see photo). The tree was henceforth known as the "Parker pine" and was a well-known landmark. It was badly damaged by fire in the late nineteenth century, however, and had to be cut down; a summer house was built around the stump in 1915 but neither the house nor the stump remain today. Other noted families along Concord Avenue were the Wellingtons, important in Lexington's late nineteenth century dairy industry (see 177 Concord Avenue form), the Cutlers, also dairymen (see 207 Concord Avenue form), and numerous Smiths, after which this part of Lexington was known as "Smith's End" in the nineteenth century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES


1830 map
1832 map
1833 map
1837 map
1935 map
1964 map
Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

PARKER PINE

### Area Summaries

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Sanderson House/Munroe Tavern
Area T - Concord Avenue

Traversing the southern part of town, near the Waltham border, what is now Concord Avenue was originally the Cambridge-Concord Turnpike, built in 1804. This was one of many such turnpikes built across the state and New England during the early 19th century. This particular route had two toll-gates, one in Cambridge and one in Lincoln. The amount of toll paid was determined by the type of vehicle and size of team or the number of animals driven. The straight but hilly route made it less than ideal and by 1828 the original stockholders petitioned to make it a county road.

272 Concord Avenue

The section of Concord Avenue from Spring Street east to the Belmont town line retains a number of the farmhouses that were built along the highway in its early years. Adding to the sense of an historic roadway are numerous stone walls. Among the farmhouses located along the former Cambridge-Concord Turnpike are three Federal-style houses with brick ends. Two of these, at 272 and 177 Concord Avenue were constructed for members of the Wellington family; the third is located at 503 Concord Avenue. In the late 19th century 177 and 503 Concord Avenue were occupied by prominent dairymen who transported milk into Boston for sale.
Historical Period Summaries

First Settlement
Early 17th century to 1691

Colonial Period
1692 - ca. 1770

Federal Period
1775 - 1830

Early Industrial Period
1830 - 1870

Suburbanization
1870 - 1915

Early Modern Period
1915 - 1940
Federal Period, 1775 - 1830

The first battle of the American Revolution took place in Lexington on April 19, 1775 and the town has long been known as "The Birthplace of American Liberty". On that fateful spring morning some seventy-seven militia members led by Captain John Parker stood on the Lexington Common to challenge the British troops. Eight were killed on the Common, seven of whom were residents of Lexington. The evening before, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, prominent leaders in the patriot cause, were guests of the Reverend Jonas Clarke in the parsonage (the present Hancock-Clarke House). Fearing that the pair might be captured by the British, Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston sent William Davies and Paul Revere to Lexington to warn them of the advancing British troops. Traveling separately, they each stopped to warn Hancock and Adams and then set off for Concord. The leaders left at about dawn and by then the militia was gathering on the common. In the early hours several dozen minutemen had gathered at the Buckman Tavern to await the arrival of the British soldiers. Just before sunrise Captain Parker’s men assembled in two long lines on the common. Following the battle, the British troops continued on to Concord, arriving at about 7 a.m. Yet, Lexington had not yet seen the last of the soldiers. That same afternoon the Munroe Tavern, located one mile east of the Common, served as the headquarters for Brigadier General Earl Percy and his one thousand reinforcements. For one and a half hours, the dining room was used as a field hospital while the weary British soldiers availed themselves of food and drink. Throughout the town, other houses were looted and set on fire by the British on their way back to Boston. Three additional Lexington lives were lost that afternoon. In terms of casualties Lexington suffered more that day than any other town. Though her population was much less than that of Concord or Cambridge, her loss in killed and wounded was more than one-third greater than both of those towns taken together. Twenty-four years after the events of April 19, 1775 a monument was erected to honor those who were slain. Completed on July 4, 1799, the Revolutionary Monument on the Common or Battle Green is the nation’s oldest Revolutionary War memorial and is the gravesite of those colonists slain in the Battle of Lexington.
## Maps c. 1640 - 1906

This selection of area guide and period maps has been scanned in high resolution to maintain the best possible visual fidelity.

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The Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey project was funded with Community Preservation Act funds. The Lexington Historical Commission is grateful for the support that the Town has shown in enabling this important project.
Lexington’s Historic Resources: A Heritage in Architecture

Architectural Style Guide

Compiled from various sources including
Greater Portland Landmarks, Living with Old Houses (1975)

Lexington Historical Commission
Index of Styles

- (a) First Period Houses, 1630 – 1730 .................................................. 4
- (b) Georgian Style, 1720 - 1780 ......................................................... 6
- (c) Federal Style, 1780 – 1830 ......................................................... 8
- (d) Greek Revival, 1830 – 1860 ......................................................... 10
- (e) Italianate, 1840 – 1880 ............................................................... 13
- (f) Gothic Revival, 1840 - 1880 ......................................................... 15
- (g) Mansard/Second Empire, 1855 – 1885 ......................................... 17
- (h) Stick Style, 1870 – 1890 ............................................................... 19
- (i) Shingle Style, 1880 – 1910 ........................................................... 21
- (j) Queen Anne, 1875 – 1910 ........................................................... 23
- (k) Romanesque Revival, 1840 -1900 ............................................... 25
- (l) Colonial Revival, 1885 – 1910 ...................................................... 27
- (m) Tudor Revival, 1900 – 1940 ......................................................... 30
- (n) Arts & Crafts/Craftsman/Bungalow, 1905 – 1930 ................. 32
- (o) Dutch Colonial Revival, 1900 – 1940 ........................................ 34
- (p) Spanish Colonial Revival/20th Century Eclectic, 1915–1940 36
- (q) “Cape Cod,” 1930 – 1960 ......................................................... 38
- (r) Mid-Century Modern, 1945 – 1970............................... 41
Federal Style, 1780 - 1830

Some things to look for are:
- symmetrical appearance with flat, horizontal lines
- two or four chimneys in gable end walls or set in from gable ends
- windows usually spaced evenly, with shutters
- occasional Palladian windows
- delicate classical trim on windows and cornices
- elaborate fan doorways, with side lights
- occasional hip roofs
- frequent brick construction
Federal Style, 1780 - 1830

517 Massachusetts Avenue, ca. 1830
782 Massachusetts Avenue, ca. 1833
177 Concord Avenue, ca. 1802
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