

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.308
Historic Name:	Ball, John House
Common Name:	Concord Art Association Building
Address:	37 Lexington Rd
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	Concord Center
Local No:	61, H9-15
Year Constructed:	c 1752
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial; Georgian
Use(s):	Art Gallery; Multiple Family Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Community Planning
Area(s):	CON.A: Concord Monument Sq-Lexington Road Historic Dist. CON.DS: American Mile Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/06/1961); Nat'l Register District (09/13/1977)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Slate Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Friday, October 30, 2020 at 9:25: AM

CON. 308

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

H9-15

Concord

A

308

NR: DIS; LHD



Concord

Neighborhood or village)

Concord center

37 Lexington Road

Name John Ball House

Present art gallery and art association headquarters

Original double-house

Construction ca 1752

deed research by Ruth Wheeler

Georgian vernacular

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) East wing, 1815

NE rear wing--20th C. Center chimney rebuilt

(See also Page 2)

Condition excellent

Moved [X] no [] yes Date N/A

Acreage less than one acre

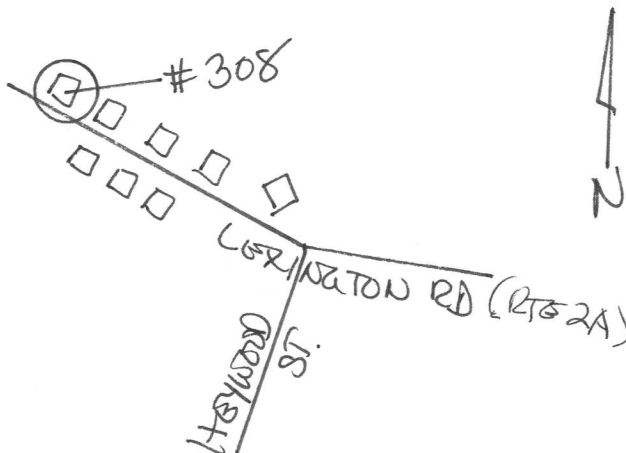
Setting Close to road in area of large

17th- late-19th-C. houses. Backs up to Minute-

man Ridge.

Sketch Map

Draw a 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. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Forbes, consultant;

research by Ann Young

Organization Concord Hist. Commission

Date 10/17/94

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [X] *see continuation sheet*

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

The John Ball House is a large center-chimney, 2 1/2-story, two-room-deep, five-bay house typical of the mid-eighteenth century, with a series of projections and additions. The one-story leanto across the back of the main house-block may represent the earliest addition, although it is possible that it is original to the house. The large 2 1/2-story east wing dates to 1815. This is a two-room-deep, two- by three-bay, 2 1/2-story section, stepped back from the front facade under an extension of the main ridge line. A tall narrow chimney rises from its east end. Behind the east wing is a long one-story rear wing of modern date. The west end of the house is extended by a full-height, one-bay addition that projects from the rear portions of the main block.

This house has three projecting "lobby" entrances. The main one, in the center of the main facade, is a wide, pedimented and pilastered example typical of the early part of the nineteenth century. It has a four-panel, double-leaf door, and a 9-over-9-sash window in each side. A second entry toward the rear of the gable end of the east wing has a hipped roof, and a four-panel door with molded surround in the facade. In the facade of the west addition is a hip-roofed entry porch, which shelters a six-panel door with a molded surround. Most of the house windows are 6-over-6-sash with projecting enframements; those in the east wing have shallow-projecting, molded surrounds. Other window configurations include an 8-over-12-sash above the main entry, and, at the west end, several 12-over-12-sash. (Cont.)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [X] *see continuation sheet*

Explain 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.

This house was built about 1752-3 on part of the property belonging to **John Ball** and his family. The earlier house of Jonathan and Hannah Ball (see Form #309), stood just to the east at today's 47 Lexington Road, and it was to that home that their son, John Ball, returned in 1752 when he finished his apprenticeship as a silversmith, (the profession commonly called "goldsmith" at that time), in Boston. He apparently had this house, as well as a separate "goldsmith's" shop on the property, built shortly afterward. John Ball was one of at least three silversmiths to live and work in Concord in the second half of the eighteenth century. The others included Samuel Bartlett (see Form #305, 5/7 Lexington Rd.), who may have used Ball's shop for his work, and Joseph Lasinby Brown, who came to Concord during the Revolution. Several pieces made by John Ball and Samuel Bartlett are in the collection of the Concord Museum.

Deed records show that in 1753, almost immediately after it was built, John Ball sold this house, with the land and workshop, to **Simon Hunt** and **Thomas Barrett**. As far as is known, neither lived here, and it is possible that this transaction represents a mortgage arrangement. In any case, the deed reserved the "easterly half part" of the house as a dwelling for John Ball's parents for the rest of their "natural lives." John Ball himself apparently continued to live at 47 Lexington Road during this time. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [X] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1830, 1852, 1856, 1875, 1889, 1893, 1906. Sanborns.

Concord Directories and Assessor's Records.

Concord Vital Records.

Jarvis. Houses & People in Concord. ca. 1884. (Cont.)

[X] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places*. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.* *NR-listed 1977.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Concord

John Ball House

Area(s)
A

Form No.s
308

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

The architectural trim here includes a projecting, dentilated front cornice with a compound bed molding below it on the main house, and, on the east wing, which has no roof overhang, another bed molding. Narrow cornerboards and a sill board are the only other adornments.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Sometime between the mid-1750's and early 1770's, the property was purchased by **Joseph Butler**, who had come to Concord to run the Bateman-Munroe Tavern, then standing on the lot where 57 Lexington Road is located. (See Form #310--John Adams House). Later, during the Revolution, Joseph Butler was Captain of one of the two companies serving under Major Buttrick, and led the company at Bunker Hill.

In 1773, Joseph Butler sold the house to **Thomas Cordis**, a sugar-broker in Boston. He was apparently one of the many to suffer financial reversals during the early years of the Revolution, and in the late 1770's received a notice to leave town for indebtedness. He died soon afterward, and in 1780 his widow, Elizabeth (Lucy) Cordis, was remarried, to Jonas Lee. **Jonas Lee** (1745-1819), who grew up on the large Lee Farm on Nashawtuc Hill, (see Form #AD), was as much a patriot as his father, Joseph, was a Tory. He continued as a farmer, apparently on the vast Nashawtuc Hill acreage, after he moved here. An important force in town affairs, in the 1780's Jonas Lee was a delegate to the county convention and served on a committee to prepare instructions for the state representative. As the leader of the town Democratic party, he was later elected State Representative, in 1806, 1808, and 1814. An active member of the Social Circle, according to his memoir, he "lived well and in good style." After Lucy Cordis Lee's death in 1808, he married Martha Abbott, who died five years later. His last, and fourth wife was Rebecca Colburn, widow of Gen. James Colburn. She outlived him by two years. Rebecca Lee was the wife with whom Jonas had the well-known, violent argument over the placement of the chimney during the building of the east wing in 1815.

During the 1820's, after their parents died, the house was owned for a time by the Lee children. **Sally Lee**, who had married clockmaker **Nathaniel Munroe** in 1803, had lived with her family in the west half of the house before moving to Baltimore in 1812. Remaining here was her brother, **Samuel Cordis Lee**, who in 1827 sold the house to **Charles B. Davis**.

Charles Davis (1797-1865), was one of the five enterprising Davis brothers who had come to Concord from New Ipswich, New Hampshire, to start new businesses. He opened a store next door at 29 Lexington Road (see Form #338). (According to some sources, he ran the store for a time in the "White Block" across the street on the Church Green). In 1829 he married Lucy Ann Hunt. Charles Davis not only owned the houses at 29 and 37 Lexington Road, but also acquired much of the land over the ridge to the rear, which, calling it "Davisville," he developed for Bedford Court. He served as the Concord postmaster, running the post office in his store, from 1838 to 1839, 1845 to 1849, and from 1853 to 1861.

The Davises' daughter **Jennie**, who had married **Dr. Robert W. Wood** in 1864 in Hawaii, either inherited the house, or, with her mother, who died in 1871, was one of the heirs who owned it after her father's death in 1865. Deed research will be necessary to determine what year it was (Cont.)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Concord

John Ball House

Area(s)
A

Form No.s
308

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

purchased from the heirs by "Walcott & Staples". This would refer to **Joel Walcott** and **Samuel Staples**. Grocer Joel Walcott lived next door at 47 Lexington Road, and is shown by 1875 as the owner of all three of the buildings on the former Ball property--29, 37, and 47 Lexington Road. (See Forms.) Samuel Staples invested in considerable real estate, including the development of lower Bedford Street in the 1850's and Hubbard Street in the 1870's. (See Form 130, 113 Hubbard Street.) He had formerly lived here, at least in 1849, as one of the many tenants to occupy the west side of the house. By 1877, both #s 29 and 37 Lexington Road were officially owned by the company of Walcott & Holden, the business partnership formed by Joel Walcott and Silas Holden in the grocery business.

During the long period of Walcott ownership, (Joel Walcott died in 1883, and the house, along with #s 29 and 47, was owned and managed by his heirs for many years thereafter), #37 appears to have remained a double-house, and had a succession of tenants. On the east side were Joel Walcott's son, Charles, and his wife, Florence (Keyes), who died in 1877, two years after they were married. Charles Walcott lived there for several years thereafter, using the dining room for his law office. His brother, Horace, also lived with him for a time, and later, in the early 1880's, his place was taken by Capt. John Gilmore of the Concord Artillery. During Capt. Gilmore's occupancy, it served as the Artillery headquarters.

Under Walcott ownership the tenants of the west side included Edward P. Thomas, a house painter, who also had his paint shop here. The house remained in the Walcott family through the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1916, the heirs sold it to **Robert J. and Sharlot B. Worcester**, who apparently used it as a single-family house. Robert Worcester was the Roads Superintendent for the town.

In 1920, the Worcesters sold the house to **Lawrence and Maria Park**, who sold it in 1922 to artist **Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts**. She was a painter, who lived at 81 Estabrook Road (see Form #233). She had founded the Concord Art Association in 1917, and she bought the house for its headquarters. The east wing was remodeled as a custodian's residence, and the second floor of the main house became a large art gallery. Under the early leadership of Miss Roberts and Daniel Chester French, the Concord Art Association acquired an impressive collection, which included paintings by American and French impressionists and members of the "ashcan" school. Among them were Monet, Hassam, Cassatt, Sargent, Henri, Benson, and Bellows. The association still owns the property, and today carries on an active program of exhibitions, classes, and workshops.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Keyes/Tolman. "Houses in Concord."

Social Circle Memoirs, Vols. I and II: Jonas Lee, Joseph Lasinby Brown, Nathaniel Munroe;
Vol. IV: Samuel Staples, Charles Hosmer Walcott..

Wheeler, Ruth. Concord, Climate for Freedom.

"Concord House Files".

Our American Mile.

Concord Art Association files.

Special Collections, Concord Free Library: Obituary File.

FORM B - STRUCTURE SURVEY
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

1. Is this structure historically significant to:
Town _____ Commonwealth _____ Nation _____

Structure has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

Agriculture	Commerce/Industry
Architecture	Science/Invention
Art/Sculpture	Travel/Communication
Education	Military Affairs
Government	Religion/Philosophy
Literature	Indians
Music	Development of Town/City

2. Town Concord AREA A 13-7161
Street Lexington Rd CON-308 308
Name House built by John Ball
Original Use HO-15-9/13/87 HOUSE
Present Use double house / art center ma
Present Owner Concord Art Association
Date 1753 Style USGS-CONCORD
Source of Date Town of Concord, "Colonial Concord"
Architect _____

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered _____

IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: cut stone
WALL COVER: Wood clapboarding Brick Stone Other _____
STORIES: 1 2/3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular
ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency 2 story S2 side Simple/Complex
PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony enhance Recessed _____
ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard lean to ell
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____
FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament
Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: pediment, pilasters
Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied 6/6 (window over entrance porch 8/12)
Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured cornerboards

OUTBUILDINGS _____

LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below

6. Footage of structure from street 15'
Property has 60 feet frontage on street

Recorder Anne Wardwell

For 68-497
Photo 11-13

S-09 005.1.061

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)

* dental course - cornice

blg 54' (including ell)
28'

FOR USE WITH IMPORTANT STRUCTURES (Indicate any interior features of note)

Fireplace

Stairway

Other

Some notable paintings in its permanent collection.

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

At one period this bldg. was a link in the "underground ground R.R."
1253
1773 *sold by Jos Butler to Thos. Cordis - widow of Cordis married Jonas*
lee - after Rev. became leader of Democrats - Rep. Mr. G. C. "out off"
built SE addition -
After that locals

REFERENCE (Where was this information)

Am. M. p. 28-30

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Original Owner: _____
Deed Information: Book Number _____ Page _____, _____ Registry of Deeds