

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.322
Historic Name:	Prescott, Jonathan House
Common Name:	Yellow Block #2
Address:	48 Lexington Rd 18-20 Lexington Rd
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	Concord Center
Local No:	56, H9-114
Year Constructed:	c 1720
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial; Colonial Revival
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce
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: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Brick



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

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Massachusetts Historical Commission

H9-114

Concord

A DS

322

80 Boylston Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02116

NR: DIS; LHD

RECEIVED

DEC 07 1994

Town Concord

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

Concord centerAddress 48 Lexington RoadHistoric Name Jonathan Prescott House
(Wesson[?], Merriam House)Uses: Present dwellingOriginal dwellingDate of Construction ca. 1720Source WheelerStyle/Form Colonial, with Col. Revival updateArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation brickWall/Trim wood clapboardRoof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures _____

noneMajor Alterations (with dates) 1895:moved back on property, separated from east
end; mid-20th C.: chimney and entry changed
(See also P. 2.)Condition goodMoved []no [X]yes Date 1895Acreage less than one acreSetting S. side of Lexington, between ChurchGreen and former E. part of building. In areaof 17th- through 19th-C. houses

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 Karen Silver and Anne Forbes
Organization Concord Hist. CommissionDate 11/18/94

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 Jonathan Prescott House is a classic 2 1/2-story, gable-roofed, five-bay "colonial" residence that has remained remarkably intact through many changes, including attachment and separation from other buildings, and a move several feet to the south on the property. It has a two-story, one-bay rear wing at the southwest corner, a projecting modern reproduction lobby entrance, and a slightly-off-center chimney that is a replacement for two narrower ones. Most of the windows are 6-over-9-sash, with projecting enframements and molded crowns. Two 12-over-12-sash appear near the rear of the east side. The windows at the west end are 6-over-6-sash, with flat surrounds. The house trim includes narrow cornerboards and a bed molding under the front, boxed cornice.

The house underwent extensive restoration in the early 1950's, which may have coincided with its conversion from a double-house back to a single-family residence. At that time the paired center entries were replaced with the present projecting lobby entrance.

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 and its former east section at 54 Lexington Road (see Form #321), remain from several residential buildings that stood on the south side of lower Lexington Road as early as the mid-eighteenth century. At that time the little area east of the common or "church green" was developing into a bustling commercial and small-manufacturing center of stores, manufacturing shops, and residences. Of the cluster of buildings here that once numbered over a dozen, only these two parts of the old "long block" and the three houses on the Church Green survive (see Forms #323, 324, and 326).

According to some recent deed research, this building, which was a free-standing house before it became part of a housing "block", may have been owned first by tailor **Joseph Wesson** as early as the 1720's. In 1754 it was purchased by one of Lexington Road's many leather-workers, **Isaac Meriam**, a beltmaker. He owned it for most of the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1790 it was acquired by housewright **Jonathan Prescott**. (It is not entirely clear which Jonathan Prescott this was, as two were living in Concord at the same time at the end of the eighteenth century. One Jonathan Prescott (1755-1810) was the brother of Samuel and Abel Prescott, Jr. Like his brothers, he was a staunch patriot, and served in the Revolution. In 1790, the same year this house changed hands, his sister, Lucy Prescott Fay, had been given the house at 105 Lexington Road by their father, Abel Prescott, Sr. [see Form #313], and if it was this Jonathan Prescott that owned the house, there may have been some connection between the two property transfers. (Cont.)

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

Maps and Atlases: Maps and Atlases: 1830, 1852, 1856, 1875, 1889, 1893, 1906. Sanborns.
Concord Directories and Lists of Poll Taxpayers.
Concord Vital Records.
Concord Town Report: 1896.
Gross, Robert. The Minutemen and Their World. (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

Concord

Jonathan Prescott House

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)
A

Form No.
322

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

It is more likely, however, that this Jonathan Prescott was the younger one [1767-1800], who was the son of John and Grace [Potter] Prescott. In 1789 he married Isaac Meriam's daughter, Rebecca, and they probably acquired the house from her father. When Jonathan died at the age of 33 in 1800, **Rebecca Prescott** evidently inherited the property, and lived on here with her five children. In 1804, she married Deacon Thomas Hubbard [see Form #405--342 Sudbury Road], and may have sold the house at that time.)

Later history. Some confusion has existed as to the nineteenth-century history of #s 48 and 54 Lexington Road, caused partly by a misinterpretation of the popular names for some of the buildings on this side of the street. Evidence from maps, Jarvis, Keyes, Tolman, and the Social Circle memoirs all indicate that by the end of the eighteenth century there were three, not two, large buildings here that encompassed a variety of functions. The best-known, and apparently the earliest (probably built by Robert Cuming in the mid-eighteenth century), was the two-story, hip-roofed building, its long side facing west over the common ("Church Green"), that came to be known as the "**White Block**". Just after the turn of the nineteenth century, Richardson & Wheeler's store occupied two-thirds of it. They were followed in about 1805 by a store run by Jonathan H. and Josiah Davis. Jonathan Davis and his family lived in one end of the building, and a large hall, used for dances and other functions, occupied the second floor. The partnership split up around the time of the War of 1812, Josiah moved to Main Street and opened a store there (see Forms #45 and 94), and Jonathan died in 1815 or 1816. His widow, Persis, who carried on the store here, soon married Ebenezer Woodward, and it became the Woodward Store. It was later run briefly by another Davis brother, Cyrus, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the building was split up into "tenements". In the 1890's a fire partially destroyed it, and it was torn down.

On the corner of the Church Green and Lexington Road, separated from the White Block only by a narrow passage, was the large L-shaped building that came to be known as the "**Yellow Block**." Not as tall as the other, it, too, probably dated to the mid-eighteenth century. Although the surviving houses at 48 and 54 Lexington Road have, apparently erroneously, been called parts of the "Yellow Block", both Keyes and Tolman say that the Yellow Block was this corner building. It was owned for many years in the first half of the nineteenth century by the Safford family of Beverly, who employed Francis Jarvis, owner of the Wright Tavern, to take care of it. This was the building that had also been owned and occupied by the Robinson family, was by 1815 the site of Capt. John Adams' store (see Form #310--57 Lexington Road), which was subsequently kept briefly by yet another Davis brother, Moses, and later housed a tin shop. By the middle of the century it, too, was filled with "tenements", mostly occupied by poor families from Ireland, and other immigrants. At the end of the century the owner was George Heywood, with the Pierce family heirs, (see Form #313--105 Lexington Road) and in 1895, when the town widened Lexington Road by several feet, the Yellow Block was also demolished

Southeast of the White and Yellow Blocks were other, smaller buildings, including two small houses, a long woodshed, and various other outbuildings, and at the edge of the brook, south of the Church Green, were two manufacturing shops. All except one of these, #1 Church Green, were also removed in the course of road-widening, slum-clearing, and other changes made here at the end of the nineteenth century. (Cont.)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CON. 322

Concord

Jonathan Prescott
House

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)
AForm No.
322

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

The houses that survive today at 48 and 54 Lexington Road were once joined as parts of a third large block. Jarvis refers to it simply as another "long tenement," and Keyes as a "long block of tenements," although it has also been referred to as "the Pratt Block." All sections of it apparently dated to the eighteenth century. It is not known exactly when the parts were joined. Reuben Brown, Jr. (see Form #312--77 Lexington Road), may have owned most of the building prior to his death in 1854, but for much of the remainder of the nineteenth century, the three parts had separate owners, and each was associated with its own narrow strip of land extending back to the Mill Brook. The southeast end, now #54 Lexington, was for many years owned and occupied by gunsmith Alvan Pratt (see Form #321), who died in 1877. The middle section had various owners over the years who rented it out, while the northwest end was more often lived in by its owner, including watchmaker **Joshua Haynes** and his wife, **Harriet** until 1855. That year it was bought by **Michael Burke**, who worked for many years for Judge E.R. Hoar, and also lived here. Early in the century the northwest "tenement" was occupied by Benjamin Haggard, a compassmaker who had a shop across the street. Before him, this "tenement" was the residence of Joseph Turner, whose wheelwright shop was across the street at #29 Lexington Road. He died in 1808 (see Form #307).

From the early 1860's to the 1890's the ownership is less certain. It is possible that **Mrs. Frank Wheeler**, Alvan Pratt's granddaughter, owned the whole property in the 1880's. **William Hancock**, and two women, **Mrs. Margaret Manning** and **Mrs. Brennan** owned it for a while, until, when the street-widening necessitated moving it several feet to the south, **Mrs. Brennan's** part (either the central part or northern end, now under the name of William Brennan,) was moved to Thoreau Court (see Form #373), and the two others were separated into unattached houses. William Hancock retained ownership of the "Pratt end", and **Mrs. Manning's** part, 48 Lexington Road became a separate double-house. She lived here for many years, until at least 1913. According to Tolman, William Hancock acquired half of it, and after **Mrs. Manning's** death in about 1914, he purchased the other half from her heirs. For many years thereafter, maps show the two houses, with their associated outbuildings, standing on a single property stretching south to the Mill Brook.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Jarvis, Edward. "Houses and People in Concord". 1882-83.

_____. Traditions and Reminiscences. Keyes/Tolman. "Houses in Concord."

Massachusetts Census: 1790, 1880.

The Prescott Memorial.

Richardson, Laurence. Concord Chronicle.

Wheeler, Ruth. Concord: Climate for Freedom.

_____. "House Files".

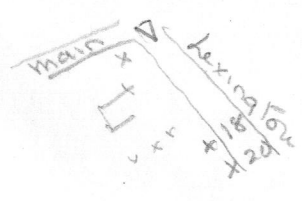


AREA A NR 19-13-56
CON. 322 Concord 5/10/57 322
Set 18 + 20 Lexington (48 Lexington rd)
ne Yellow block #2
Original Use Stores with living
Present Use homes NEDIS-9/13/77 LTD-3/6/61
Present Owner private PR CONCORD USGS CONCORD
late 18th - early 19th Style "colonial" Sand B
Age of Date Queen Anne
Architect _____
Used Altered _____
SITE endangered by _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: brick
WALL COVER: Wood clapboards Brick Stone Other _____
STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular
ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency near 2 story Simple/Complex
PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony _____ Recessed _____
ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____
FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament
Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: 18 - enhance porch side walk added! (originally 2 doors double house)
Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied different sized panes 20 - 2 1/2
Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured cornerboards
OUTBUILDINGS _____ LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below 6. Footage of structure from street 20'
Property has 36? feet frontage on street



Recorder Anne Wardwell
For MHC
Photo II-7
Photo 68-991
Photo 5-09-065-1056

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

buildings (each)
30 x 30 (double cells)

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

Fireplace

Stairway

Other

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

- known as Yellow block - shop - center of 18-19th C -
(see Inv. 13th Parish + "White store")
- A center section between these 2 house was removed to
Thoreau Court
- First Catholic mass in Concord said to have been said in this
block - is that historic?
- Alvau Pratt, Quinsworth, owned Southern end
- Wm. Hancock, an English machinist (1st Concord mechanic to
understand + service motor cars + sell gas) bought Northern end

— 18th C town center —

REFERENCE (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

American Hill p. 31-2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Owner: _____

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