

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.161
Historic Name:	Brown, Lucy Jackson - Whitcomb, Henry House
Common Name:	
Address:	181 Lexington Rd
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	East Concord Center
Local No:	H9-24
Year Constructed:	c 1845
Architect(s):	Chapman, John H.
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival; Italianate
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	CON.DS: American Mile Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/06/1961)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Wood Flushboard 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

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FORM B - BUILDING

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Assessor's number

H9-24

USGS Quad

CONCORD

Area(s)

DS

Form Number

161

Town

CONCORD

LHD - 316161
SEC - B

(neighborhood or village)

east Concord center

181 Lexington Road

Address

Lucy Jackson Brown House

Historic Name

Henry Whitcomb House

dwelling

Present

dwelling

Original

ca. 1845; parts

Date of Construction

may be pre-1716

Wheeler; Rusk

Style

Greek Revival/Italianate

Form

unknown

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

dressed granite

Foundation

wood clapboard and flushboard

Wall/Trim

asphalt shingle

Roof

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

small barn, ca. 1980

Major Alterations (with dates)

2-s. rear

addition, enlarged basement--

ca. 1973; mid-20th C. E. ell.

See also P. 2.

Condition

good

Moved

☒ no ☐ yes

Date N/A

Acreage

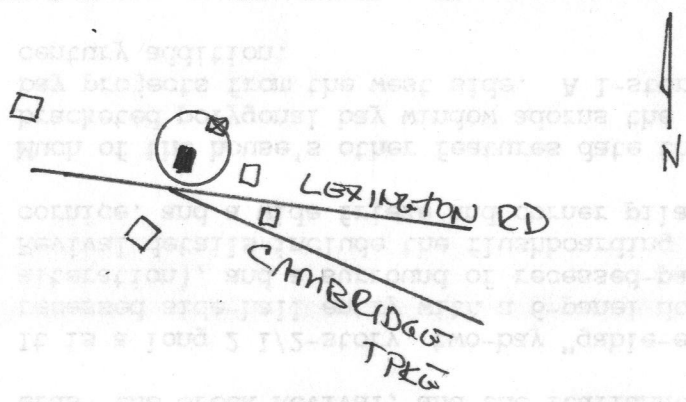
less than one acre

Setting

Opposite Cambridge Turnpike, in residential district of 17th-19th-century houses. Backed by wooded ridge; 1970's stone retaining wall, brick walk and granite posts and steps at front. Large open yard to west.

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 A. Forbes
research by Donna Salacuse
for Concord Hist. Commission

Organization June, 1992

Date (month/day/year) _____

BUILDING FORM

CON. 161

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

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

Like many of Concord's historic houses, #181 may contain parts of a much earlier building, possibly built ca. 1666. No building is shown in this location on the 1830 map, however, and it is most likely that this was a new, rather than rebuilt house, in ca. 1845. The structure as seen today is largely the product of two nineteenth-century eras--the Greek Revival, and the Italianate.

It is a long 2 1/2-story, two-bay "gable-end" house with a pedimented facade and recessed side-hall entry with a 6-panel door, sidelights (their leaded panes are a later alteration), and a surround of recessed-paneled boards with cornerblocks. Other Greek Revival details include the flushboarding of the facade, an echinus-molded, boxed cornice, and a wide frieze and corner pilasters.

Much of the house's other features date to the later Italianate period: a two-story, bracketed polygonal bay window adorns the facade, and a 2-story hip-roofed rectangular bay projects from the west side. A 1-story ell at the northwest corner is a mid-20th-century addition.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

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.

According to some sources, this building, which stands on the seventeenth-century homesite of Joshua Wheat, may contain much of his house, which possibly dates back to the 1660's. (Even Ralph Waldo Emerson's journal contains contradictory evidence as to whether this is the case.) That building was still standing in about 1845, when Ralph Waldo Emerson and his wife, Lydia(n) Jackson Emerson, had the present house built opposite their residence for Mrs. Emerson's elder sister, Lucy Jackson Brown. Lucy Brown (1798-1868), who had two children, had been abandoned by her husband Charles, and came to Concord to live in 1835. She became a friend of Henry Thoreau, who wrote the poem beginning "I am a bundle of vain strivings" for her, and he apparently even did some of the construction work on the house. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☒ see continuation sheet

Maps, atlases: 1852, 1856, ca. 1871, 1875, 1889, 1906.
Keyes/Tolman "Houses in Concord." 1885; rev. 1915 and 1920's.
Jarvis, "Houses and People in Concord." 1882.
Town Directories and tax lists.
Wheeler, Ruth. "Our American Mile." (Cont.)

☒ 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

Community

Property

CONCORDBrown/Whitcomb House

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s) Form No.

/61

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Lucy Brown appears to have moved from the house by 1850, and it was rented out for several years. Among the tenants were George M. Brooks and his first wife Abba (1850-51; see #1 Sudbury Road,) and J. Fay Barrett. By the early 1870's the property had been acquired by **Henry L. Whitcomb** (1835-1918), who added the ell and the bay window. Henry Whitcomb began as a housepainter, but in ca. 1868 succeeded Albert Stacy (see 68 Sudbury road) as proprietor of the book store in a wooden building on the milldam where the present building at #33 Main Street is now located. He owned the bookstore for 50 years, and succeeded Stacy as Concord postmaster, a job he held for 20 years, keeping the post office in the store. For about forty years he was also treasurer of the Concord Lyceum.

After Henry Whitcomb died the house was bought by **Edward McKenna**, who owned it into the 1950's. His heirs later sold it to **Arthur W. Parke**.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Wheeler House File, #L26

Fenn, Mary. Old Houses of Concord.

Owners' records.

Rusk. Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 308.

Allen, G.W. Waldo Emerson, p. 426.

Emerson, Ellen T. Life of Lidian J. Emerson, p. 153.

Concord Obituary File: Henry L. Whitcomb, 1918.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Community
CONCORD

CON. 161
Property Address
181 Lexington
Road

Area(s)	FormNo.
	161

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

- ☐ Individually eligible ☐ 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

Anne McCarthy Forbes

Statement of Significance by _____
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

For its association with Lucy Jackson Brown, sister-in-law of Ralph Waldo Emerson, this house meets Criterion A as part of a National Register District. It also meets Criterion C for its contribution to the historic architectural character of Lexington Road. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, feeling and association.