

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.166
Historic Name:	Bull, Ephraim Wales House
Common Name:	Grapevine Cottage
Address:	491 Lexington Rd
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	Merriam's Corner
Local No:	I9-4125
Year Constructed:	c 1716
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial; Colonial Revival
Use(s):	Agricultural; Restaurant; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture
Area(s):	CON.DS: American Mile Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/06/1961)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Wood Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Stone, Uncut



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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 9:47: AM

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

19-4125

CONCORD

DS

166

LHD-3/6/61

Town CONCORD

SECT-C

Place (neighborhood or village) Merriam's Corner area

491 Lexington Road

c Name Ephraim Bull Cottage
"Grapevine Cottage"Present dwellingOriginal dwellingf Construction pre-1716; early
20th C. additions
Wheeler House Fileorm First Period/Colonial
Revivalct/Builder unknown

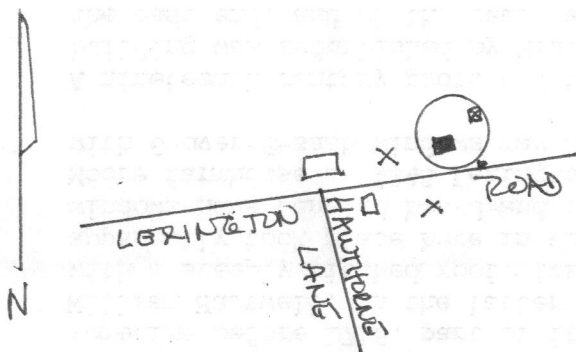
r Material:

ation fieldstone and rubbleWall/Trim wood clapboardRoof wood shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

shed, garageMajor Alterations (with dates) northeast
section added, east "jog" removed,
early 20th C. (See p. 2.)Condition fairMoved ☒ no ☐ yes Date N/AAcreage less than one acreSetting In residential district of 17th- to
19th-century houses near Merriam's Cor-
ner. Modern houses to sides and opposite.
Slate marker in picket fence at front;
descendant of original grapevine on
southeast.

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.



A. Forbes

Recorded by research by Anne Hayden
for Concord Hist. CommissionOrganization June, 1992

Date (month/day/year) _____

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

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

Although the northeast section of this two-part building is a well-designed 2-story Colonial Revival gambrel-roofed cottage of the early twentieth century, its main architectural significance lies in the southwest section. Here is one of Concord's few remaining First Period 1 1/2-story, central-chimney cottages. Probably dating to sometime before 1716, part of it may even have been built by the original grantee, William Hartwell, in the latter part of the seventeenth century. A low, deep structure, with a steeply pitched roof, its entry is in the two-bay west end. Some updating apparently took place here in about the 1830's-'40's. The shuttered, 12-over-12-sash windows have paneled board-and-corner-block surrounds that are similar to those on the Moore farmhouse at #345 Lexington Road, and a pair of small gable-roofed facade dormers with 6-over-6-sash windows may have been added at about the same time.

A nineteenth-century photo and turn-of-the-century postcard, taken before the decrepit building was refurbished by Mrs. Lothrop, shows that it had a sizeable "Beverly jog" on the east end, and on the rear, another pair of dormers and a full-width added leanto.

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.

In spite of its many alterations, #491 Lexington Road is one of the most significant houses in Concord, for it was on this property that Ephraim Bull developed the most successful variety of grape in America, the Concord Grape.

Although maps show the cottage belonging to Ephraim Bull as early as 1852, research by Ruth Wheeler indicates that he rented the house for many years before finally purchasing the property in 1859. The building was very old at that time, and probably predates 1716, when it is known to have been owned by blacksmith Thomas Ball. It remained a blacksmith's house for over a hundred years, in spite of several changes of ownership. In 1737 Thomas Ball sold it to Thomas Munroe who owned several other properties near the center. He sold it to John Savage in 1749, who sold it to Timothy Wheeler III. It was purchased from him by Kendall Bryant. Under his ownership it was occupied by blacksmith Thomas Bryant and his son Reuben. It was next rented to another blacksmith, Nathaniel French, but evidently had several different owners before French died in 1834 at the age of 77. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Maps, atlases: 1830, 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."
_____. Wheeler House file L19; undated newspaper article.
Former inventory form.

☒ 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

CONCORDEphraim Bull House

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s) Form No.

166

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Ephraim Wales Bull (1806-1895) moved here in 1836-8 after first living on Belknap Street. A gold beater by trade, he relocated to Concord from Boston either for his health or for the promise of work associated with the carriage building industry. He was also an amateur horticulturalist, and developed new breeds of roses and other plants. His triumph, however, was the Concord Grape, created in 1849 through experiments with wild native seedlings. It was introduced to the market in 1854, and quickly became a sensation; today it is still the most widely cultivated grape in the United States.

For many years a trellis against the cottage wall, (possibly that shown in the early postcard photograph,) supported the original Concord grapevine. It was winterkilled some time in this century, however, and a present vine on the property is a shoot from the old root.

Although he eventually died in poverty at the Home for the Aged, Ephraim Bull was for much of his life one of Concord's most respected citizens, and held important elected positions. He served as head of the Board of Selectmen, and later as Representative to the state legislature.

By the end of the nineteenth century the little cottage was in disrepair. Mrs. Daniel Lothrop, who lived next door at the "Wayside" purchased it, removed the jog and the leanto, and repaired and remodeled it. Calling it "Grapevine Cottage," she rented it out for a number of years. Among its tenants were Frank Ivers, Roy Rolfe Gilson, Samuel Hoar, Jr. and Raymond P. Baldwin. In 1931 it was bought by Miss Mary C. Tobin, later Mary Tobin Callahan, who opened a tearoom in the house.

CON. 166

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Community
CONCORD

Property Address
491 Lexington Road

Area(s)	FormNo.
	166a

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.

This property meets Criteria A and B of the National Register as the home of Ephraim Wales Bull, developer of the Concord Grape. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, feeling and association.



Area C HD CON. 166 72 4 ✓
 wn Concord
 eet Lexington Rd
 me The Grapevine Cottage
 iginal Use _____
 esent Use _____
 esent Owner private
 te NO 1600? Style _____
 ource of Date "Col. Conc.", T. & C.
American Hds/p7
 chitect _____

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: _____

WALL COVER: Wood shapboard Brick Stone Other _____

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 pitch Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency gambrel side pitched roof Simple/Complex

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony at front Recessed _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard ridge ell at side
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament

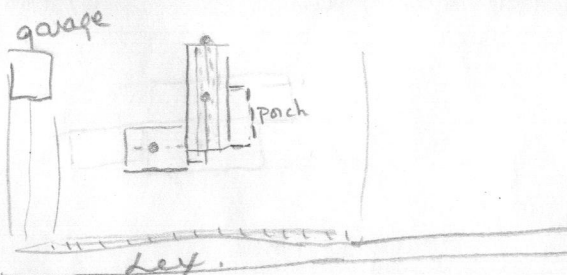
Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: porch obscures

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied _____

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured _____

OUTBUILDINGS garage LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below 6. Footage of structure from street 60
 Property has 100 feet frontage on street



Recorder _____

For _____

Photo VII-27 2:09.065.1.072
68-578 HD

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

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)

Ephraim Wales Bull developed Concord Grapes while living there, Sept. 1849.

For many years a trellis against the cottage wall supported the original Concord grapevine. Recently was winter-killed, present vine is shoot from same root. On trellis is tablet inscribed with a quotation from Bull's journal.-see WPA p. 217

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Owner: _____

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