

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1588
DEC 28 1993

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Jerathmell Bowers House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 150 Wood Street ☒ not for publication

city or town Lowell ☒ vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01851

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough 12/22/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough Date Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain): _____

for Signature of the Keeper Entered in the
Guymon Lapley National Register Date of Action 1/28/94

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

AGRICULTURE: agricultural field/outbuilding

DEFENSE: military facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial/Postmedieval English

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone, brick

walls clapboard

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
MASS-525, 1941
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1673-1914

Significant Dates

1673, ca. 1680, 1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

None

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Lowell Historic Board

Jerathmell Bowers House

Name of Property

Middlesex County, MA

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	8	3	0	6	8	7	5	4	7	2	2	2	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing											
2															

3															
Zone	Easting			Northing											
4															

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared ByMargo B. Webber, Preservation Consultant, Lowell Historic Board with Betsy Friedberg,
name/title National Register Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date December, 1993

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02117

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Mr. James Kearns
name150 Wood Street
street & number telephone 508-453-9007Lowell
city or town state MA zip code 01851**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. DESCRIPTION

The Jerathmell Bowers House, built ca. 1673, is the oldest known domestic building in Lowell. The unpretentious 1 1/2-story, New England Colonial cottage is a five-bay timber frame structure sheathed in clapboard. It remains intact, with 17th, 19th, and 20th century additions that do not detract from its architectural integrity. These include the northwest kitchen ell of late 17th or early 18th century date, the late 19th century milking shed to the east of the original structure, the early 20th century sunroom along the building's west side and an early 20th century eastward extension of the milking shed. Located at 150 Wood Street, the building sits on the crest of a gentle knoll. Once surrounded by open meadows and fields on a site that eventually grew to upwards of 150 acres, the property is now limited to a three-acre parcel whose wooded edges create a buffer from modern commercial and multiple-unit residential complexes beyond. The property is in good condition and has experienced minimal exterior alterations to its historic appearance.

Sited on the crest of a gentle rise, with a broad field in front of it, the Jerathmell Bowers House faces south towards the intersection of Wood and Westford Streets, two busy commercial streets. The house sits within six feet of Wood Street to the west but is raised up about ten feet from the winding road. Across Wood Street is an area of modern apartment and condominium complexes on land that was formerly part of the Bowers farm. To the north and east of the house, its site is now largely wooded. Immediately north of the house, the land falls sharply down a wooded slope where a small stream, Black Brook, still runs through the property. The easterly edge of the site, also wooded, drops off to a large manmade pond on a city-owned parcel to the east.

The landscape has changed considerably since its earlier days because plantings and natural vegetation have matured to full size. Photographs from the early 20th century show the house surrounded by open fields, with just a few large trees along the east side of Wood Street and behind the house to the north. Over the past decades, however, since the area ceased being farmed, natural growth of underbrush has produced a more wooded setting for the house. Although it did not appear this way historically, the more recent wooded growth acts as a buffer to create a certain rural country feeling and to set the house apart from modern encroachments beyond its wooded bounds.

The Jerathmell Bowers House is a five-bay, 1 1/2-story frame structure with several small additions. It sits on a stone foundation and has a broad pitched roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. A large central chimney with a stepped top and raised flat cover dominates the design.

The south facade is of five bays, one story in height, with the center entrance slightly off-center to the east. The windows are two-over-two wood sash with wooden slat shutters on only the outer side of each pair. The door is a two-light/two-panel design of late 19th/early 20th century date. A raised wooden ramp with a wooden handrail extends from the entrance to the east edge of the facade. It was added in the 1980s. A sloped concrete bulkhead with metal doors is situated below the west bay, added ca. 1914.

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Directly west of the main structure and in the same plane as the facade is a three bay, flat-roofed sunroom addition of ca. 1914 date. It stands on a fieldstone foundation, is also sheathed in clapboards, and has two-over-one wood sash. In the west bay is an entrance with a four-light door. Concrete steps and a wooden handrail give access to this entrance. The sunroom extends northward seven bays, intersecting the rear ell at its south end. Closely spaced two-over-two sash are placed above a clapboard base in all but the northernmost bay, which retains its original six-light panelled door.

The building's east elevation is a simple gabled end with two windows at the first story and one centered beneath the roof's peak at the second story. All three openings have two-over-two wood sash and wooden slat shutters. The clapboard siding has a vertical cornerboard at the southeast end and an open return of the eave. Attached to this elevation at its northerly end are a series of two attached sheds that extend eastward. The first is one story in height, with a pitched roof and two large openings with side-hinged plank doors. This was used as a milking shed and appears to date from the mid 19th century. To its east is a smaller one-story addition of ca. 1914 date with a flat roof that slopes slightly down to the east. Its facade has one large opening which matching the one to its west. The surrounds of a window in the east bay remain, but the opening itself has been sheathed in clapboard. The milking shed and addition are now used as a garage and storage area.

To the rear of the building's main mass and not visible from the street is a small, one-story, two-bay addition with a pitched roof, which wraps around the building's northwest corner. It was most likely built in two phases, the west bay dating from ca. 1700 as an enclosure over the original well, and the east bay dating from ca. 1914 when the house experienced a major interior modernization. This addition has a door in its east elevation and two windows in the north elevation. The easterly window has two-over-two sash, while the westerly opening and the two windows on the west elevation have six-over-nine-light sash in keeping with their much earlier date. A tall narrow chimney with a corbelled brick cap extends out from the west elevation, marking the earliest kitchen stove location inside.

The interior of the Jerathmell Bowers House has a simple four-room plan that appears to have evolved from the traditional two-room-deep cottage plan. It is one of the earliest domestic plan types characteristic of the region. A large central chimney stack separates the ground floor into four rooms. The primary entrance and staircase to the second floor are positioned directly in front of the chimney stack. The two front rooms have fireplaces on their inside walls and the northwest room retains portions of the original hearth and baking ovens from its original kitchen function.

Legend has it that a ceiling hatch in the ca. 1700 kitchen gave access to a small attic space over the original roof where early family members hid during Indian raids. Evidence of the building's early roofing materials and methods as well as its later addition's construction methods can be seen within this space. The original roof retains hand-split wooden shingles protected within the later gabled addition at the northwest corner. The 17th century roofing members are hand-hewn, consisting of

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common purlins, ridge piece and principal rafters. The rafters have been trenched rather than mortised to accept the purlins, and the ridge piece also is trenched. According to architectural historian Abbott Lowell Cummings, this phenomenon continues only through the 17th century. The appearance of a "proper ridge pole" evolved in the 18th century.

In the ca. 1914 addition, machine-milled wood is evident, including circular saw marks. The common rafter construction employed here, with lateral underboards and no ridge pole, is a technique typical of its early 20th century date.

The interior has little decorative embellishment, and its structure is intact within its 19th and 20th century finishes. The northwest room demonstrates 17th century finishes in its simple raised-panel cupboards above the hearth. There are slightly jowled chimney posts and wide hand-sawn floorboards and wallboards. Hand-cut nails and the simple rail and stile cellar door also substantiate its colonial origins.

The Bowers House has been compared to other first period houses in eastern Massachusetts and evaluated within the context of the First Period Houses of Eastern Massachusetts Thematic Resource Nomination (NR 1990). It appears likely that its ca. 1673 date is correct, but the extensive interior changes that have concealed original fabric make it impossible to confirm this positively. The three-bay, four-room plan also appears somewhat larger than many known first-period structures, which also casts some doubt on the definitiveness of its exact date and/or earliest configuration.

It is possible that the Bowers House might have originally consisted of only its west portion, with the east bay added within the next twenty years, based on the similarity of framing and construction methods now visible. Since the interior finishes have almost entirely hidden the original structure except for a few posts and beams, one can only surmise whether the building was actually constructed in one or two phases. Further research would require removal of interior plasterwork to explore how the east portion's framing is integrated with the central stairhall framing. Evidence of differences in member size, shape, or joinery on the two sides of the central bay might confirm a two-part construction.

The Bowers House is a straightforward, unpretentious example of one of Lowell's earliest houses. Over time, alterations have occurred, but the integrity of its 17th century origins remains intact. It is a rare survivor of pre-industrial Lowell in a community where consideration of industrial development often overshadows our knowledge of Lowell's earlier agricultural society.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently known on the property, it is possible that sites are present. First Period houses are often situated at locations exhibiting the same characteristics favored by Native people in selecting sites. These include close proximity to wetlands, preference for well

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drained soils (especially on south-facing slopes), low to moderate sloping land surfaces, and protection from prevailing winds and storms. The Bowers House site is situated on the crest of a gentle, well drained knoll with nearby wetlands to the west and a large man-made pond at the base of the knoll east of the site. This Pond may have originally been wetlands associated with a tributary stream of Black Brook which flows to the Merrimack River approximately one-half mile north of the house site.

Each of the above factors constitute locational criteria which are favorable for prehistoric site locations. One prehistoric site is located in the general area (within one mile) northwest of the property on the east bank of Black Brook at its confluence with the Merrimack River. The property is also located in an area which was reportedly cleared by Native Americans prior to European settlement. The above factors combined with the size of the property (3 acres) indicates a high potential for the recovery of prehistoric survivals.

There is also a high potential for the recovery of significant historic archaeological remains on the Bowers House property. Additional documentary research, archaeological survey and testing can help locate barns, outbuildings, privies, wells and trash areas associated agricultural beginnings of the farm and later residential use. Archaeological testing can also locate and document builder's trenches and other construction features associated with the original construction of the house and later modifications. Structural, artifact and feature type archaeological date may also survive related to the operation of a distillery at the site, the only industrial type actively known to have operated at this location.

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8. SIGNIFICATION

The Jerathmell Bowers House, Lowell, retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register on the local level. Under Criterion A, the Bowers House is significant for its role in the development of the agrarian economy of East Chelmsford from first settlement into the 19th and early 20th centuries, by which time the area had become part of the new community of Lowell. The house is the earliest surviving in Lowell. In addition, the property has remained under continuous Bowers family ownership from its construction to the present day.

Under Criterion C, the property is a well-preserved example of a modest 17th-century farmhouse that has undergone only minimal expansion and alterations over a period of more than 300 years. The house and its setting reflect the social, economic and cultural patterns of the Bowers family as the environment shifted from an agricultural to an industrial economy during its period of significance, which spans from 1673 to 1914.

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Criterion A: Lowell was originally a part of the village of Chelmsford, settled in 1653 by a land grant of the General Court, and at the outer fringe of English-ruled territory. The promise of fertile meadows bordering the Concord and Merrimack Rivers prompted Captain Edward Johnson, one of the original explorers of the Merrimack Valley, to entice some twenty persons from Woburn and Cambridge, including the Rev. John Eliot, to brave the danger and isolation of such a remote outpost. The principal town center was located only about three miles west of the Wamesit Indian villages.

Although founded in 1653 and incorporated in 1655, Chelmsford's growth was impeded by constant Indian assault: first in King Philip's War (1675-1678), then by a series of sporadic attacks through King Williams War (1689-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) and the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

The native Wamesit tribe generally sided with the colonists or remained neutral but was fearful of attacks by the Mohawks. Chelmsford did experience two serious attacks in which several buildings were burned. Life during this period focused on protection, church, and government.

According to early records, one new resident by 1670 was Henry Bowtell, who moved his family from Cambridge and in 1670 was granted a parcel of land. His family included a stepson, Jerathmell Bowers, born in Cambridge in 1650. In 1671, both Bowtell and Bowers were named in the Chelmsford tax list, signifying that each was now a land owner.

Bowers was married in 1673 and his first son, Jonathan, was born in the following year. Chelmsford functioned under a closed field farming system, which strongly influenced the physical development of the town. As a land grant type of property division, each individual allocation of land varied depending on owner status and need. It generally meant a farm ranging from two to twenty acres, with additional acreage for crops granted some distance away. Lands were fenced individually along each owner's prescribed boundaries. Inhabitants were inclined to spread out into different areas under the closed field system and would not see each other regularly except to conduct town government and worship.

Early in the 1670s, one such group of seven settlers moved out to the northeast corner of Chelmsford territory near Black Brook. Jerathmell Bowers, John Shipley, John Webb, John Wright, Joseph Parkhurst, Jonathan Butterfield, and John Spaulding first settled this fringe area often referred to locally as the "neck houses" on the "Highway to the Merrimack." All were farmers, attracted to areas that had often already been cleared by the Indians. Although English wheat did not adapt well, Indian corn, oats, barley, and rye became primary crops, as did apple and fruit orchards. Livestock was raised--oxen, horses, cows and sheep--and lumbering was also an important aspect of these early farms.

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By 1677, a distillery was opened by Jerathmell Bowers and licensed, according to town records, to sell "strong waters." The popularity and prosperity of the Bowers still is indicated by the description of numerous footpaths that all family led to or passed by the Bowers farm in its early years.

In efforts to make peace with the native tribes nearby, the original Wamesit Purchase was made in 1686 from Wannalancit, chief of the Wamesit Indians. Jerathmell Bowers was among the fifty associates who received portions of land. These fifty tracts were known as "Pawtucket" and were developed for farmland for one hundred years. In an additional deed from Wannalancit, Bowers received six acres in return for his kindnesses towards the Indians. Later that year, he obtained title to a large tract of land at Pawtucket Falls, making him one of the largest landholders in the area. Land grants were commonly awarded as payment for military service, which may well have been the case here.

Protection from Indian attack was still a major problem for Chelmsford's inhabitants, causing some to leave for more civilized areas. To improve protection, the town in 1690 designated nineteen homes, including the Bowers House, to serve as garrison houses, used by neighbors for refuge in the event of an attack. Bowers himself served in the military during this era, entering in 1676 and rising to the rank of Captain. He is mentioned in military accounts as a leader of counterattacks against the Indians and as a courier between regiments.

Issues of community government were a priority concern in the town. In 1691, the town was fined for lack of school facilities, and Jerathmell Bowers, as one of its selectmen, was sentenced to serve in the county jail until responding to the county's demands. In 1697, Bowers again intervened on behalf of Chelmsford's residents, asking the Court to grant "clemency and compassion" in the payment of taxes because of the hardships incurred by Indian attacks and a poor harvest. As a selectman until 1732, a courier to the General Court, and an appointee to research and secure the town's boundaries, Bowers contributed much to the development of the struggling town, while still focusing his primary efforts on the survival of his farm.

Boundary definitions of the town were a major concern. In 1701, the new town of Dracut was formally incorporated by twenty five families in the northeast section. Not until 1726 were all the Wamesit lands formally annexed to Chelmsford. Continued boundary disputes into the 1750s eventually gave up 300 acres of the Tying farm to the town of Dunstable. In 1780, after many petitions objecting to the distance to the town center for public worship, the southerly part of the town was finally set off and its seventeen families were among those who formed the town of Carlisle.

With the conclusion of the French and Indian War and soon after the Revolution, Chelmsford's residents were finally part of a safe, self-sufficient, and prosperous agrarian community. At about this time, the northeast "neck" area, now more commonly referred to as East Chelmsford, was about to change dramatically with the announcement in 1788 that the Middlesex Canal would be built there. Timber and farm products would no longer need to be hauled overland at the Pawtucket Falls.

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One result was the early development of Middlesex Village, just north of the Bowers farmstead along the southern bank of the Merrimack River. The Bowers farm was no longer a rural outpost, but instead stood close to a growing village center. Incorporated in 1793 and opened in 1804, the Middlesex Canal ran thirty one miles from Chelmsford south to the millpond at Charlestown, providing an excellent means for transporting farm products to Boston markets. The canal remained in operation until 1853, although once the railroads arrived in 1830, it experienced a steady decline in use.

The 1802 opening of the Chelmsford Glass Factory, also in Middlesex Village, was soon producing upwards of 330 feet of window glass annually and supported a community of 20 families in the Village. By 1816, a sawmill and gristmill at Pawtucket Falls had been established by Luke Bowers (a son of Jerathmell) and his sons, another gristmill was started by Nathan Tyler, and the seeds of a more commercial/industrial society in East Chelmsford had clearly been sown.

The Proprietors of the Locks and Canals, in 1821, began a study for a new canal system along the Merrimack and in 1822 opened their first textile mill, the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. The next few years brought the rapid creation of an entire industrial village, not only geographically and visually distinct, but also completely foreign to the original Chelmsford community both socially and economically. In 1825, East Chelmsford petitioned to be incorporated as a separate town. With a population of 2,000, the new town was incorporated on March 1, 1826. It was named after Francis Cabot Lowell, the visionary force behind its creation.

The subsequent industrial growth of Lowell during the 19th and early 20th centuries has been well documented. Its role as a "model city" for other New England mill town is undisputed. Yet, for all the attention paid to Lowell's industrial focus, the outer limits of the city (it was incorporated in 1854) remained primarily agricultural for much of this time.

The Bowers farm steadily grew until the late 19th century, when its size approximated 150 acres. It remained one of the largest farms in the area. The Bowers family continued to pass down the farm from generation to generation and to expand and rebuild its structures as needs changed. A fire in 1815 destroyed the early barns directly west of the house across Wood Street and caused considerable loss of the farm's fruit orchards and forests. New barns were immediately erected in their stead, again being situated directly west across Wood Street from the main house. New attached milking sheds were added adjacent to the house's east elevation around mid century.

By the turn of the 20th century, growth of the city's immigrant population had resulted in expansion of new residential areas as far west of the mill district as Middlesex Village, which abutted the Bowers lands to the north. Several new streets were laid out in the area, and there was pressure for development of former farmlands. In 1896, the Bowers farm contained ninety acres of land. A photograph of the house appeared in the Lowell Courier Citizen of 1909; at the time, it was

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surrounded by wide open fields on all sides, with just a few trees along the winding dirt road which was Wood Street.

In 1914 the family sold off a parcel of 13.72 acres at its western edge along the Chelmsford border. The profits from this sale were apparently used to renovate and update the Bowers home, including building a sunroom and removing the rear wall of the front parlor. In the 1930s, the acreage was divided into two parcels, forty eight acres west of Wood Street owned by Jesse Bowers and the house and parcels east of Wood Street and south of Westford Street owned by Joseph Walter Bowers. The acreage continued to be farmed, with major crops being corn and turnips, large apple orchards, and a substantial herd of dairy cattle. Subsequent land takings in the 1950s by the City of Lowell and sale of the remaining farmlands to commercial and residential developers in the same decade ended the property's agrarian use. The barns were demolished in the 1950s, leaving only the house and a three-acre parcel of woods and meadows on which it sits as evidence of the extensive farm that once dominated the area.

The property has remained under continuous Bowers family ownership from its construction until the present time. As described previously, the home was originally built by Col. Jerathmell Bowers (1650-1724). It then passed to his son Jonathan Bowers (1674-1744), to his son Jonathan Bowers (1701-1756), to his son William Bowers (b.1712), to his son Col. Joseph Bowers (1780-1859), to his son Sewall Bowers (1810-1893), to his son Joseph Bowers (b.1854), to his son Joseph Walter Bowers (1882-ca. 1933), to his daughter Mildred Bowers Wahlgren (ca. 1900-1986), to her daughter Marjorie Wahlgren Kearns (1925-1987), and to her husband, James Kearns.

Criterion C: The Bowers House is significant as a rare survivor of Lowell's early era as a farming community when a modest 1 1/2-story farmhouse was the most common building type. Its design reflects the basic needs of shelter and protection in that society, with little thought or need for elaborate joints or decorative embellishment. Being a simple farmer in need of quickly built housing as the outer limits of Chelmsford were being settled, Bowers' modest home reflects the needs of the yeoman farmers of the time.

Although the Bowers House has not been definitively determined as a First Period Building, it is none the less significant as an early domestic building type in its plan and heavy timber framing. It illustrates the evolution from a two-room cottage plan to a central chimney plan in early Chelmsford, as well as the early structural framing system consisting of a box frame composed of sills, posts, plates, girts, and beams. A separate roofing system with trenched rafters was also typical of the area in the 1670s. Although largely hidden at present, the structural core has the potential to reveal additional historical information about building methodology of the period.

As the family grew and prospered during successive generations, the house, too, changed, its expansion and renovation to reflecting its occupants' evolving needs and tastes. As early as the 1680s, enclosure of the outside well within a rear shed/kitchen reflected a higher quality of life. This

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Jerathmell Bowers House
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**Section number 8 Page 6

enclosure also afforded a secret hiding space above the roof in case of Indian attack is also a possible reason for its construction.

The gradual expansion of the farm and the its owners' increased sense of stability as the farm prospered are evident in the building's history. The absence of any major changes to the original design during the 18th and early 19th centuries underlies the worthiness of the original design for the occupants' needs. With the late 19th century came the desire for an attached milking shed, which was erected directly east of the house, and new windows and door to modernize the facade. An outhouse was also installed in the shed. Not until the early 20th century did the house experience much change, and even then, only in the form of an added sunroom, enlarged kitchen ell, and the insertion of modest new wall and ceiling finishes in the primary living spaces.

The only significant change to the property has been its setting. Whereas the house originally was surrounded by as much as 150 acres of open fields and orchards, all but three acres of the property have been replaced by modern developments, dominated by modern apartments and condominiums to the west across Wood Street.

Despite these changes, however, the property retains its character and integrity of location, design, materials, and association as an early, typical farmhouse in the Lowell/Chelmsford area. It is further distinguished by being the oldest surviving house in Lowell.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric settlement in Lowell are poorly understood, any surviving sites would be significant. Prehistoric resources on the Bowers House property may extend historic land use patterns back thousands of years into the prehistoric period. This information can be valuable in understanding present and past environmental change as it effected changes in the economic and social history of Native Americans who inhabited the area and later individuals who inhabited the house. Potential prehistoric resources on the property may contribute much needed information pertaining to local and regional settlement models. This information may document the relationships of sites along interior tributary streams and wetlands to larger expected sites along the main course of the Merrimack River. Prehistoric sites in this area may also contribute information which helps clarify the regional importance of interior site, particularly those near major fall lines in the Merrimack River to those located on the coast in the asterion zone near the confluence of the Merrimack River and the Atlantic Ocean.

Historic archaeological remains described above have the potential to document socio-economic change and culture history on a farm and later residence which evolved in a 17th century agricultural frontier settlement that grew to the 19th and 20th century industrial city of Lowell. The location of barns, outbuildings, and occupational related features (trash areas, privies, wells) can help reconstruct the original 17th century lay out of the farm and subsequent changes which occurred to the present.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 7**Jerathmell Bowers House
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

This information can help document the role or place of the Bowers House and its related farm complex within well defined regional and temporal patterns for First Period houses. Identification and recording of construction features and refuse patterns around the house can help document the evolution of the house and its changes through time. This information can be used to help date the original house construction more precisely as well as later alterations in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The exact year of the house raising is unknown. Archaeological survivals have the potential to test the current by prothesis that the original ca. 1673 house was a 1 1/2 story cottage enclosing only the western half of the house. Construction features and structural remains can also document changes which were made, if any, to adapt the structure to its use as a licensed distillery in 1677 and as a garrison house in ca. 1690. Structural remains of barns and related outbuildings combined with the analysis of refuse areas can document the evolution and nature of the Bowers farm complex, hopefully providing examples or details of one of the earliest examples of 'closed field' farming in the Lowell area. Detailed analysis of occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) combined with eleven successive generations of Bowers family occupation of the property can provide information on the social, cultural and economic changes which occurred with the inhabitants of one of Lowell's earliest homestead, as it developed from a frontier agricultural settlement to the industrial period. The long term ownership of the farm by the Bowers family offers the rather rare opportunity to view the lives of a single family as it adapted and changed through time. Detailed analysis of occupational related features on the property can also be important in testing the thesis that "cottage" colonial style houses like the Bowers House can be attributed to a "slightly poorer class of yeomen than hitherto" as well as the need for "short order housing". These factors have distinct socio-economic implications for New England in general.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

**Jerathmell Bowers House
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Jerathmell Bowers House
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Colby Street and Wood Street, the boundary runs eastward along the south side of Colby Street for a distance of 131 feet. It then turns southerly and runs for a distance of 874 feet along the east property line of 150 Wood Street until reaching the north side of Westford Street, where it turns westward along the street edge for 100 feet, curves around to the north along the east side of Wood Street, and proceeds northward along the east side of Wood Street to the point of beginning. See attached City of Lowell assessors maps #47 and 47.

Verbal Boundary Justification:

This boundary defines an area of three acres and conforms to the present property line of the Jerathmell Bowers House. Although the house once stood on a much larger site, all of the other acreage has been sold off over the years and has been developed for other uses incompatible with the original farmland setting and use of the property.

The three-acre site does retain much of the house's original setting, as it is situated on a knoll above the adjacent areas and close to the winding old country way, Wood Street, which is now a busy but still winding roadway. The three-acre site contains the house on its high grassy knoll and an open meadow to the south. To the north behind the house, a small stream, Black Brook, still flows by. Most of the property's outer edges are now wooded and overgrown rather than open fields as they were historically. This has the positive advantage of creating a buffer against the modern apartment complexes to the west across Wood Street and to the mixed commercial development and city public works facilities along Westford Street to the south. The eastern edge of the property abuts a city-owned parcel that is primarily wooded, lessening slightly the negative impact of commercial and residential development to the other three sides.

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bowers, Jerathmell, House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 12/28/93 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/11/94
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/27/94 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/11/94
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 93001588

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1/28/94 DATE Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ applicable criteria
☐ justification of areas checked
☐ relating significance to the resource
☐ context
☐ relationship of integrity to significance
☐ justification of exception
☐ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTM's ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____

Date _____



81
PHOTOGRAPHER: BARBARA FORD LATTY
FEBRUARY 1991

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
JFK CIVIC CENTER
LOWELL, MA 01845

STANDING SE OF BUILDING AND FACING NW TOWARDS SOUTH ELEVATION

PHOTO 1 OF 5

JERATHMELL BOWERS HOUSE
150 WOOD ST
LOWELL, MA 01845



PHOTOGRAPHER: BARBARA FORD LATTY
JANUARY 1991

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE - LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
JFK CIVIC CENTER
LOWELL MA 01852

JERATHMELL BOWERS HOUSE
150 WOOD ST
LOWELL, MA 01851

STANDING SOUTH OF BUILDING AND FACING NORTH TOWARDS SOUTH ELEVATION

PHOTO 2 OF 5



1
PHOTOGRAPHER: BARBARA FORD LATTY
FEBRUARY 1991

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
JFK CIVIC CENTER
LOWELL MA 01852

JERATHINELL BOWERS HOUSE
130 WOOD ST
LOWELL, MA 01851

STANDING NE OF BUILDING AND LOOKING SW TOWARDS NORTH ELEVATION

PHOTO 3 OF 5



VERATHMELL BOWERS HOUSE
150 WOOD ST.
LOWELL, MA 01851

PHOTO BY BARBARA FORD LATTY
FEB, 1991

NEG. AT LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD, JFK CIVIC CENTER, LOWELL 01852

STANDING AT W. SIDE OF DINING ROOM LOOKING E. AT E. INTERIOR
ELEVATION

PHOTO 4 OF 5



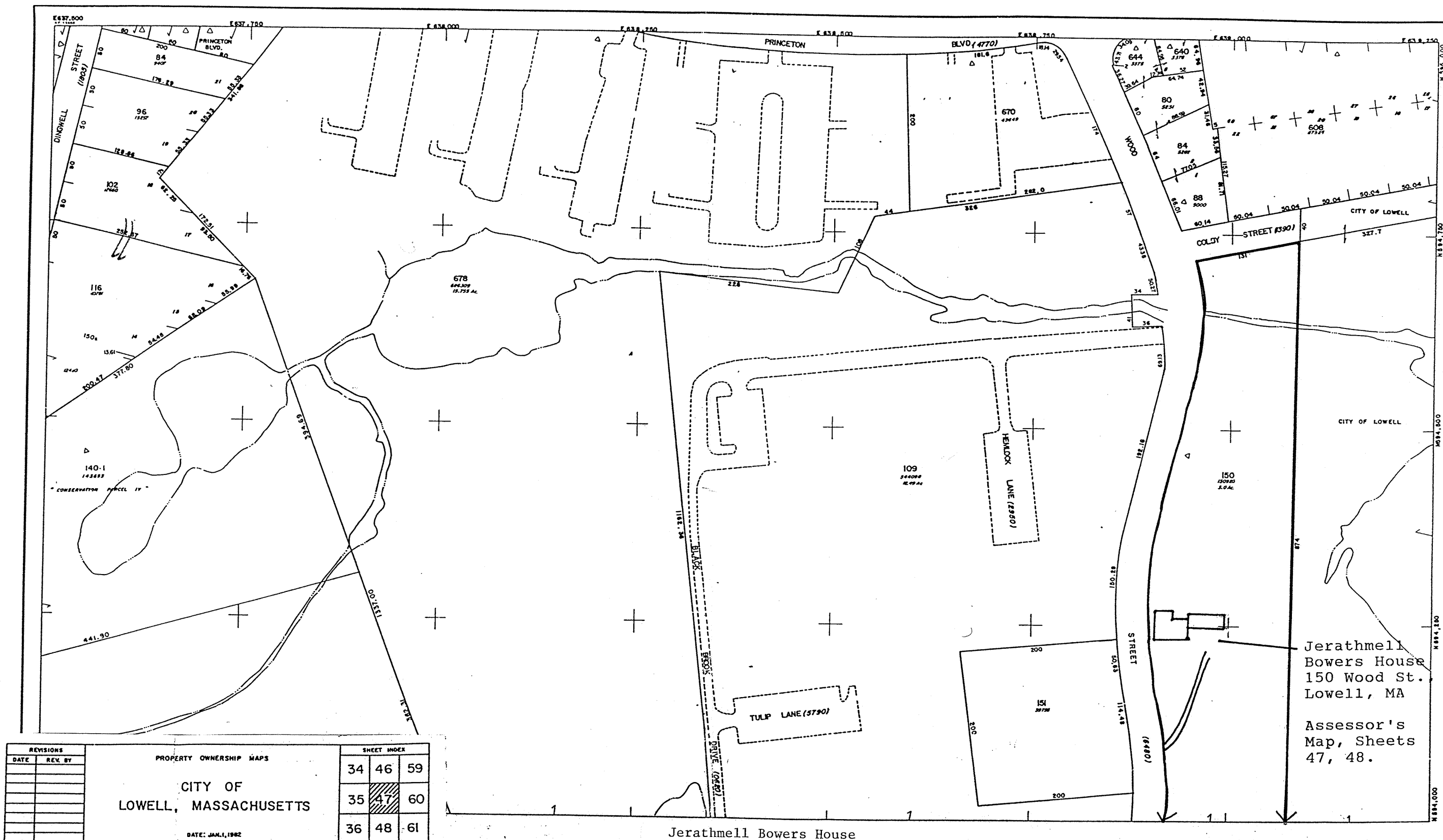
JERATHMELL BOWERS HOUSE
150 WOOD ST.
LOWELL, MA 01851

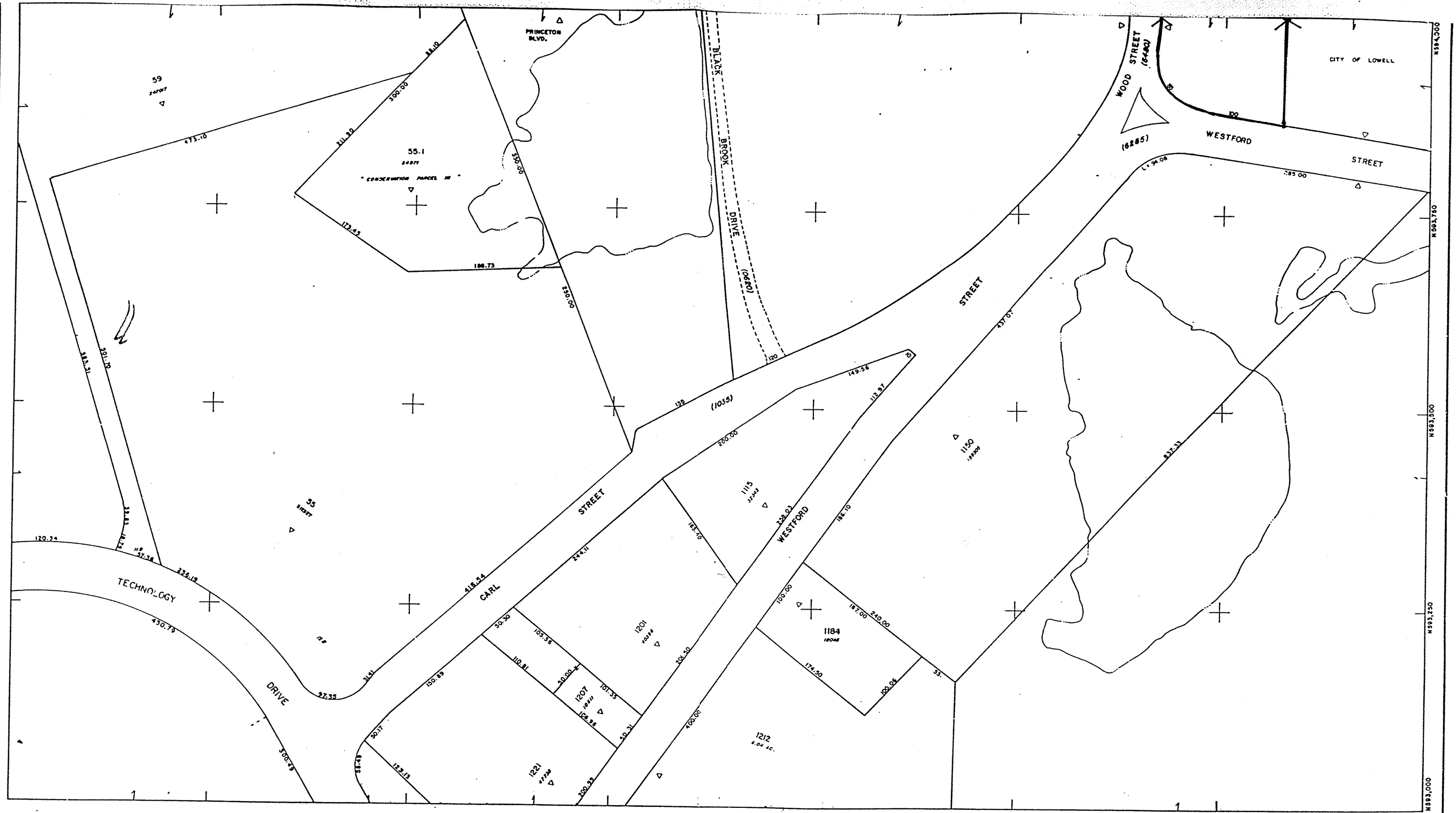
PHOTO BY BARBARA FORD LATTY
FEB, 1991

NEG. AT LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD, JFK CIVIC CENTER, LOWELL, 01852

STANDING AT NW SIDE OF DINING ROOM, LOOKING SE AT
S. INTERIOR ELEVATION

PHOTO 5 OF 5





Jerathmell Bowers House
 150 Wood Street
 Lowell (Middlesex County) Massachusetts

Lowell Assessors Map #48
 map # 2 of 2

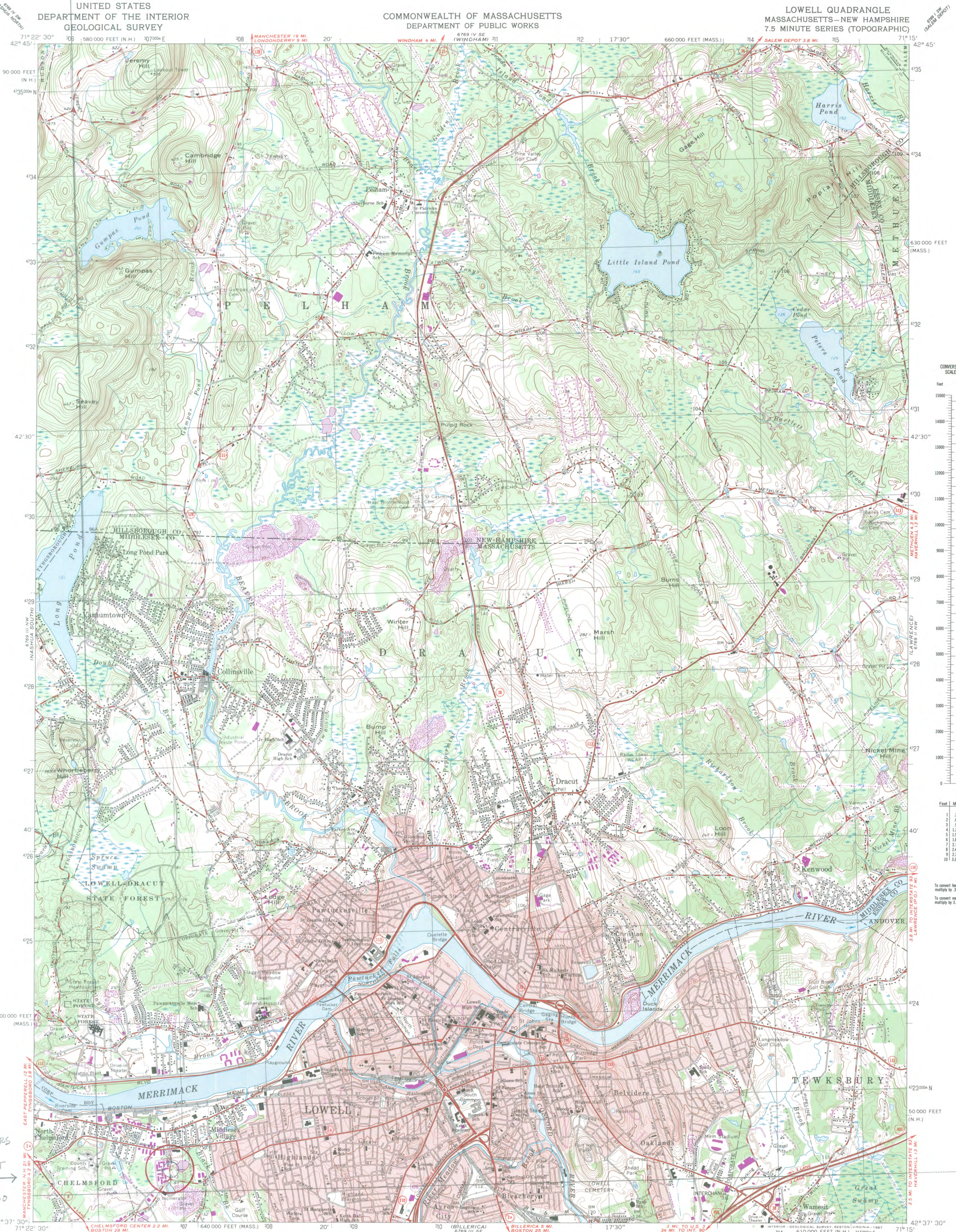
PREPARED BY
HUNNICUTT & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 A DIVISION OF L. ROBERT KIMBALL & ASSOC.
 ENGINEERS - APPRAISERS - CARTOGRAPHERS
 ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

TOPOGRAPHIC PLANS DATED 4-10-80
 USED AS BASE FOR OWNERSHIP MAPPING

REVISIONS		PROPERTY OWNERSHIP MAPS	SHEET INDEX		
DATE	REV. BY		35	47	60
		CITY OF LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS	36	48	61
			37	49	62

DATE: JAN. 1, 1982

50 0 50 100 150
 SCALE: 1" = 50'



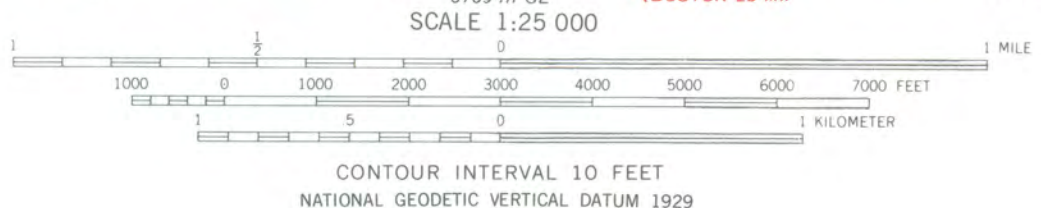
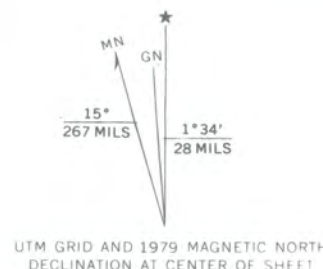
CONVERSION SCALES	
Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	500
6000	200
5000	100
4000	50
3000	25
2000	10
1000	5
500	2.5
200	1
100	0.5
0	0

Feet	Meters
1	0.3048
2	0.6096
3	0.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters
multiply by 0.3048
To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808

JERATHMELL BOWERS
HOUSE
150 WOOD STREET
LOWELL, MA
19/306875/472260

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1939 and 1944. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and New Hampshire coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid
zone 19
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	State Route

LOWELL, MASS.-N. H.
42071-F3-TF-025
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
DMA 6769 III NE-SERIES V814

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 6 meters south and
41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



December 22, 1993

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

RECEIVED

DEC 28 1993

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Jerathmell Bowers House, 150 Wood Street, Lowell (Middlesex County), Massachusetts, 01851.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Because the city of Lowell is a participant in the Certified Local Government program, the owner was notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60-120 days before the meeting and was afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

RECEIVED 413

DEC 28 1993

enclosure

cc: James & Marjorie Kearns
Mayor Tarsy Poulios, City of Lowell
Diana Prudeaux-Brune, Administrator, Lowell Historic Board
Margo Webber, Preservation Consultant
Anne O'Brien, Librarian, Pollard Memorial Library