

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THEME: Architecture

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Fairbanks House

AND/OR COMMON

Fairbanks House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Eastern Avenue and East Street

CITY, TOWN

Dedham

VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

9th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

25

COUNTY

Norfolk

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Fairbanks Family in America, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Fairbanks House, Eastern Avenue and East Street

CITY, TOWN

Dedham

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Norfolk Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dedham

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (24 sheets, 28 photos, 1 data page)

DATE

1939, 1940; 1936, 1930's FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original house was a gable-roofed two-story frame structure and had only a small porch and two main rooms--a hall and parlor--downstairs and two bed-chambers above. Originally the hall was larger than the parlor, but later, the parlor was lengthened to the east by six feet, and the chamber over it correspondingly enlarged. This eastern addition is covered by a hipped roof. The massive central brick chimney of the original section measures 8 by 10 feet. Later in the 17th century, a lean-to containing two rooms was added at the back of the oldest portion; its long roof reaches very close to the ground on the north or rear side.

The interiors of the original section were much changed by repairs, added plaster, wallpaper, and paint, but there is still some very old wainscot on the west wall of the hall that may be original: it is made of wide boards with beaded edges, laid horizontally and overlapped, like clapboards. On the west wall of the chamber overhead, one can also see remains of the old clay filling, daubed on split oak laths between the heavy studs. The sturdy oak frame of the oldest section, with its 8 two-story posts, is of the "upright" type, without overhang. Principal rafters are joined together at the ridge, but there is no ridgepole, and only one purlin on each side. Some authorities assert that this original section was built with oak timbers brought from England.

A new wing, virtually a separate frame house with its own chimney, was added at the northeast rear corner, traditionally, about 1641. Entered by a small porch in the angle where the east wing joins the original house, this wing contains two rooms, each with a corner fireplace, and a large chamber above that is reached by a winding stair. The west wing, traditionally added about 1654, is entered by a door from the hall at the west end of the original house. The two-story west wing has never had fireplaces or chimney, and the single bedroom on each floor is believed to have been used as chambers by the hired men of the Fairbank farm. Both east and west wings have a gambrel roof of a typical New England profile, and although their traditional dates of construction may be too early, it is likely that both had been completed by the time of Jonathan Fayerbanke's death in 1668.

Windows in the house have been changed, perhaps many times, but a fragment of leaded diamond-pane sash found in the hall chamber of the oldest section suggests their original appearance. Perhaps the two tiny upstairs windows in the south (front) facade indicates their original size.

In 1964 part of the original fabric of the east wing was lost when a car skidded and came crashing through the outside wall. Again in 1967 more of the original fabric was destroyed when an arsenist piled gasoline saturated clothes before the front door and ignited them. The fire spread rapidly over the clapboarding and onto the roof before it was extinguished. A section about six feet wide at the center of the house to the left of the door was badly burned. In both these instances a local carpenter successfully replaced the damaged materials.

SP
Lester

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
X ___1600-1699	X ___ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
___1800-1899	___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1636-38

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Whether or not the Fairbanks House in Dedham, Massachusetts is accurately identified as the oldest existing frame dwelling in the United States, 1636-38, it is certainly one of the earliest and finest preserved examples of the organic growth many houses underwent in the period of seventeenth-century medieval design. The house has been in continuous possession of the Fairbanks since its construction, adding a continuity to its history which links it directly to the past.

HISTORY

Although 1636 is frequently given as the date of construction of the original portion of the house, it may have been a year or two later, as the builder, Johnathan Fayerbanke, did not arrive in Dedham until September 1636 with his wife and six children. The family had arrived in Boston three years earlier from Yorkshire, England. He was granted twelve acres of land including upland for his house lot and four acres of swampland.

Fairbanks must have prospered, taking an active part in committees and town meetings. He received additional landgrants in 1637, 1642, 1644 and 1656 and as his wealth expanded, so did his house.

The center portion of the present house is the oldest. The original house consisted of a small porch, hall and parlor downstairs and bedchambers above. Later, a lean-to was added at the back and, tradition says in 1641, a wing was added to the east side of the house. Still later, traditionally around 1654, the west wing was added. Both east and west wings have the gambrel roofs typical of New England, and although their traditional dates may be too early, it is likely that both had been completed by the time of Jonathan Fayerbanke's death in 1668.

Some authorities assert that the original house was built with oak timbers brought from England. It is known that some 17th century settlers moving to new territory took prepared timbers with them in order to erect their houses quickly for defensive purposes, and this may have been the case with the Fairbanks House. An additional point of interest is the fact that the house has been in the possession of the Fairbanks family throughout its entire existence of more than 300 years. The Fairbanks Family Association has maintained the homestead in excellent condition since 1903 and it is opened as a house museum.

9 MAJOR BIBLICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	3 2 1 1 2 0	4 6 7 8 8 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Fairbanks House is on its original site which is now at the intersection of busy highways. It is bounded by the west edge of East Street on the East, the south edge of Eastern Avenue on the north, the eastern property line of the adjoining American Legion on the west and the north boundary of adjoining properties on the south. A caretaker's cottage is located on the property which does not contribute to the national significance of the landmark but which does not greatly intrude upon the Fairbanks House.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Patricia Heintzeman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project;
original prepared by Charles Snell, 1967

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey</u>	<u>August 1975</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street NW.</u>	<u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington</u>	<u>D.C. 20240</u>

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. Heintzeman
 3/4/77

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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In 1969 a preservative based on creosote was applied to the clapboarding and wooden shingles during the autumn. The town of Dedham installed a sidewalk and curbing outside the boundary fence, which itself was strengthened to give added protection to the house. The house is currently undergoing the restoration of its fieldstone foundation which had been encased in concrete, probably about 1910, and was absorbing water and rotting the wood.

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