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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any 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 Samuel Harrison House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 80 Third Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city or town Pittsfield \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state Massachusetts code MA county Berkshire code 003 zip code 01201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Brona Simon Feb. 3, 2006  
Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

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 this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 3/22/2006  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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Pittsfield (Berkshire), MASection number 7 Page 1**Narrative Description***Setting*

The Samuel Harrison House is located on the east side of Third Street, north of Lake Street in the City of Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The property is situated in an urban residential district located in the northeast quadrant of Pittsfield's compact plan that developed gradually during the nineteenth century as a working-class neighborhood for craftsmen, mechanics and laborers. Third Street is at the rear of this plan, three blocks removed from Pittsfield's main street. It is short and does not connect to any of the city's principal thoroughfares. On its south end, it terminates at Fenn Street, one block short of reaching East Street, the city's eastern gateway. The railroad truncates Third Street at its north end; there is no crossing. Lake Street bisects Third Street into two blocks. Parcels on the east side of Third Streets are larger and more variable in shape. Lots along Third Street are narrow and rectangular with frontages ranging from 50 to 70 feet. Lots are 100 feet deep on the west side of the street and 150 feet on the east side, where the Samuel Harrison House is located.

Silver Lake, a large natural body of water, lies just east of Fourth Street (giving meaning to the name of Lake Street), and the street and lot plans disintegrate as they approach this distinctive geographical feature. The topography of the area is part of the depression containing the lake, and is evident in the way it slopes rather sharply from the west to east. Lots on the west side of Third Street are at a higher elevation than those on the east side, and many of them have been filled and re-graded to flatten the terrain. The Samuel Harrison House lot conforms to this incline; the rear parcel line is quite a bit lower than the street.

Houses are sited at the front of their lots with slight set-backs creating small front yards. Not all are centered along their frontages; some houses, like the Samuel Harrison House, are sited close to a side lot line creating a larger side yard. Still, there are sizeable spaces in between houses. Generally, these houses are 1½-2 stories in height with gable ends oriented to the street. Certain house forms and plan are repeated in the streetscape; many are variants of the upright-and-wing type, which were popular working-class house designs during the mid- and late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The houses on Third Street are universally built of wood and clapboarded. The Samuel Harrison House is similar in appearance to at least four other houses visible from it along Third Street.

*House Form*

The Samuel Harrison House is 23 feet wide across its front, street façade and 32 feet long into the lot. It is composed of a 1½-story, front-gable upright block and a one-story porch wing with a shed roof along the south side elevation. (PHOTO 1) The walls are covered with narrow horizontal clapboards with simple

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corner boards. Fenestration is symmetrical on the façade with two windows on each level; the second-story windows are smaller than those on the ground floor, reflecting different ceiling height within. On the other elevations, windows are placed in relation to the interior plan. (PHOTOS 2 & 3) The entrance to the house is located in the west wall of the one-story wing, recessed under a short porch notched into the corner. The house was erected on a full basement with mortared, cut stone walls on its north, west, and south sides. The slope of the lot exposed the basement to grade on its rear, east facade; this basement wall was constructed of wood like the rest of the house. (PHOTO 3) A low-pitched gable roof covers the main rectangular block of the house with its ridge parallel to the sides and gable end facing the street. The raking edge of the roof on the street façade is embellished with a projecting Greek Revival-style cornice with short returns at the base. The cornice extends along the side elevations under the overhang of the roof. The street end of the porch is a solid wood wall with a doorway that is also distinguished with Greek Revival ornament. The raking edge of the wing roof has an elaborated cornice identical to the main roof, but with a full return creating a half-pediment. This feature is supported at the corner by a simplified Doric pillar. Like the main block, the cornice continues along the eave of the wing's south elevation. (PHOTO 1)

*Structure*

The house was constructed using vertical planks as a structural system. In an urban, industrial-era application of a well-established 18<sup>th</sup>-century western New England tradition, this example was built without posts of any kind, much less any vestigial connection to historic house frame joinery. Presumably, the other similar houses on the street are built in the same fashion. Yet, there is no established architectural context in the city in which to determine if this was a common or unusual practice for the architectural type or period.

The planks are approximately 1" thick and are about 12" wide on the average. They were sawn with a circular blade, which associate the house with an advanced saw mill technology uncommon for the antebellum era. The boards extend from the basement to the attic. (PHOTO 4) At the bottom, they are nailed to heavy, hewn sills that are joined at the corners, and they are nailed to lighter hewn plates at the top. Corners were made by overlapping the ends of the planks and nailing them fast. Unlike 18<sup>th</sup>-century vertical plank houses, there are no posts joined to the sills and plates at the corners and openings to reinforce the planks at stress points. Medial girts were nailed across the boards near their center to add rigidity to the walls and support second-floor joists. Separate planks were nailed in the gable spaces and to form the rear basement-level wall. Once erected, the walls were further solidified by battens nailed over the inside of the vertical joints between the planks. These battens were the same, 1" thickness as the planks but were only one-third to one-half as wide. Wood lath was nailed across these battens and formed the foundation for plaster to complete the interior surface of the wall. On the exterior, wood clapboards were nailed across the vertical boards to seal the house and complete the rigid, lattice structural sandwich of the wall. The house's wall system is completely intact. Wood clapboards on the rear (east) wall have been covered with asphalt shingles. (PHOTO 3)

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The roof was framed in a conventional manner with sawn rafters nailed to the plates and to a thin ridge board. A board deck was nailed across the rafters, using thinner planks than those used in the walls, and wood shingles were applied to the exterior. The present top layer of the roof surface is composed of asphalt shingles. Window openings were cut into the plank walls. Board surrounds nailed to the inside and outside surfaces of the walls created a space where vertical sliding sash units were installed. Original window sash, containing six-panes of glass, survive only in the east wall of the basement. These were replaced elsewhere in the house by two-pane sashes at the turn-of-the-century. The present windows are metal frame replacement sash with insulated glass. Exterior doors, of which there are only two, were installed in the plank wall in a similar manner. The principal entrance, on the recessed west elevation of the south-side wing, has been replaced with an insulated, metal-clad door. The doorway in the rear wall at the basement level is essentially intact, although the six-panel wooden door is not original.

*Plan*

The Samuel Harrison House has an asymmetrical three-room plan that is repeated in variable dimensions on all three levels of the house. On the principal, ground floor, there is a parlor, roughly 16' x 11½', in the front of the plan; a larger, living room, approximately 12' x 18', in the southeast corner; and a small bed chamber, 9' x 10', in the northeast corner. (FIG. 1) A stairway and corridor are positioned between the parlor and the chamber in the center of the north side of the plan. The house's only chimney rises through the plan in the southwest corner of the chamber. The parlor and the chamber are contained in the main block of the house while the living room extends into the wing section of the house. The front portion of the wing has no outside wall and functions as a porch, with the south side of the main block serving as the exterior exposure. This wall contains a window lighting the parlor. The entrance to the house is located at the east end of the porch, and it enters into the living room. The living room is the principal space in the plan and is connected to all the other parts of the house.

The second-floor plan is similar to the first in that it has a single room across the front of the house and two in the rear with a stair and corridor in between. (FIG. 2) The plan is smaller, since it does not include the space provided in the wing on the lower floors. A partition has been added in the front room to create a bathroom on the south side of the space. Another was erected parallel to the stair wall to create a corridor connecting the bathroom to the stairs and creating a smaller chamber in the front of the house. Any evidence of an enclosure or doorway erected at the stair landing prior to this point to provide privacy for the front space has been concealed behind later floor and ceiling surfaces. It is possible that the later materials are also concealing evidence of a partition dividing this large space into two smaller rooms such as in the rear of the plan. The two rear chambers were fully enclosed with doors opening onto a small corridor behind the stairs. The south bed chamber was larger, as the corridor took space from the north chamber. The south chamber also has a closet, which occupies a small area between the stair shaft and the south wall of the house. The partition between the north and south chambers is not aligned with the partition between the common room

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and the chamber below it. It bisects the narrower width of the second-floor plan and is positioned north of the one below it. Therefore, the chimney is exposed in the south chamber above, rather than in the north chamber below.

The plan of the basement is also divided into three spaces similar to those of the upper floors. The basement room in the front of the house is subterranean, and likely functioned as storage space for foods and other provisions. The large rear space in the southeast corner of the basement, where the basement extended under the wing, was a living space that appears to have originally functioned as a kitchen for the house. The room in the northeast corner of the plan had no windows and served an undetermined purpose. A sizeable gable-roof shed was attached to the north side of the east elevation of the basement using an extension of the stone foundation/retaining wall as its north elevation. (PHOTOS 3 & 4) Nothing remains of this structure except its outline on the house wall and the north retaining wall. Although it was clearly an adjunct to the kitchen space, the function it served (work space, wood storage, animal housing) is not clear. The attic has no floor or partitions and was uninhabited.

*Interior Finishes*

The interior of the Samuel Harrison House was finished in a thorough and restrained manner. All the walls and ceilings of living spaces on all three levels were plastered. Those walls that are still exposed have a white plaster coat with painted finish. Standard-width pine boards were used to make the floors. Square-edged pine trim was used to form simple surrounds for all the windows. Plain, square blocks distinguished the upper corners. Door surrounds were beaded on their inside edges. Four-panel doors mounted on iron butt hinges and mortised latches filled the openings. Baseboards were made from similar, square-edged lumber. A trabeated mantle framing a false fireplace on the east wall of the parlor is the only ornamental object in the house. (PHOTO 5) It formed a backdrop for a stove that was probably vented through the ceiling and into the chimney at the attic level.

New materials have been applied over wall, ceiling and floor surfaces in most cases. On the ground floor, walls in both the parlor and bedchamber have been covered with wood-grained sheet paneling. A new plaster-board layer has been added over the parlor ceiling; the plaster ceiling remains exposed in the rear chamber. The walls and ceiling in the living room have been resurfaced a number of times as the kitchen that now occupies the space has been upgraded and remodeled over the years. (PHOTO 6) Original plaster material survives underneath. Even the corridor to the basement stairs has been encased in new wall and ceiling materials. A new layer of flooring covers the entire first-floor level. All rooms now have narrow-width tongue-and-groove flooring. A pine material is used throughout, with the exception of the parlor, which employs oak boards. The stairway is intact with its plaster walls and wooden treads and risers. The only original door survives in the parlor doorway; all other doors have been replaced or removed, particularly the door to the exterior, which is a metal-clad insulated replacement door. All the windows have been similarly replaced with metal frame sashes.

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The second floor was finished with wall and trim materials similar to the ground floor, and it has experienced the same additions of sheet paneling on the walls and ceilings and new flooring. The partition introduced to create the bathroom and the passageway leading to it were constructed of plaster board. Like the kitchen, the bathroom has undergone a number of resurfacing and remodeling efforts since its appearance in the house. Windows on this level have been replaced with metal sash units with the exception of that at the north end of the west wall. This opening still contains a pair of two-pane wood sashes, the second-generation fenestration in the house.

The basement has been spared any significant alteration. The walls in the basement kitchen space have a beaded board wainscoting, which appears to have been the only location for this utilitarian treatment in the house. Plaster walls and ceilings, though deteriorated, are intact in both rear rooms; the original board floor also survives. Original trim, doors and windows are present. A replacement six-panel door has been inserted in the exit in the rear (east) wall of the kitchen, and 6/6 sashes survive in the window next to it.

*Lot and Yard*

The original 66' x 150' lot on which Samuel Harrison's house was built in 1858 remains intact, it was divided into two equal parcels when he conveyed the eastern half to his daughter in 1888, but it has remained in family ownership. The house his daughter built on this rear parcel in ca. 1892 no longer exists, so the current appearance of the property is consistent with its period of significance. It is not known if any other barns or sheds were built on the lot except the one attached to the rear of the house. There would have been a privy that probably was used well into the twentieth century, but its location has not been identified. It may have been incorporated into the outbuilding attached to the house.

Rev. Harrison wrote that he maintained a garden on the Third Street lot from the time he purchased it in 1852. Five years later, when he built the house, he presumably kept up his gardening somewhere at the rear of the property where the land was flatter than in the front. It is likely that a driveway went from the south end of the Third Street frontage to the rear of the house and the lot. This was deeded as a right-of-way when the lot was subdivided in 1888. With the subdivision and the construction of the second house at the rear of the lot, the landscape changed significantly. The site of this house is a significant archeological component of the property. More recently, the area along the south end of the street frontage has been filled and to provide off-street parking for two automobiles. The owners of the neighboring property to the north constructed a concrete retaining wall and leveled the lot. The site of the second house has grown up with trees. The intermediate space in the lot has become thick with underbrush as has the open area south of the house.

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Pittsfield (Berkshire), MASection number 7 Page 6**Archaeological Description**

While no ancient Native American sites are located on the Harrison House property, sites may be present. Four sites are known in the general area (within one mile). Prior to urban development, environmental characteristics of the property probably represented locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that were favorable for the presence of Native sites. Construction of two houses on the lot, related grading, and filling have obscured natural soil characteristics and topography of the property; however, based on neighboring properties and the glacial history of the area, well drained soils and level to moderate slope characterized the lot. The property is also located within 1,000 feet of Silver Lake, a natural body of water within the Housatonic River drainage. The East Branch of the Housatonic River is located approximately one-half mile south of the property. Given the above information and the small size of the parcel (0.23 acres), a low potential exists for locating significant ancient Native American resources on the Samuel Harrison House property.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Harrison House property. In 1888 Harrison conveyed the eastern half or rear portion of the property to his daughter who built a house on the property in ca.1892. Structural evidence may exist from that house and related outbuildings that were demolished sometime in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Structural evidence may also exist from a gable roof shed that was originally attached to the rear of the Harrison home. Structural evidence of additional outbuildings related to the Harrison House may survive. Occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) associated with both the Harrison House and daughter's house may survive anywhere on the small lot. It is conjectured a privy associated with the Harrison House that was probably used well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century may have been incorporated into the outbuilding attached to the rear of the house noted above.

(end)

Samuel Harrison House

Name of Property

Berkshire, MA

County and State

**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 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**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage

Military

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1858-1900

**Significant Dates**

1858

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Samuel Harrison

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Pittsfield Historical Commission

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Pittsfield (Berkshire), MASection number 8 Page 1**Statement of Significance***Summary*

The Samuel Harrison House is significant at the local, state, and national levels under National Register Criteria B and C. In the first instance the property is significant for its associations with Samuel Harrison (1818-1900), an African-American clergyman who contributed an important voice to the philosophical and political debate over the issue of race relations in the City of Pittsfield, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and at the national level during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Harrison's personal experience, which extended from birth in slavery to active participation in the national movement to end slavery in the South, is a story of national scope and significance. The example of his life and endeavors are documented in his own eloquent publications and the work of later biographers including, more recently, a documentary filmmaker.

Apprenticed to a Philadelphia shoemaker at age nine years, shortly after he and his mother were manumitted, Harrison had a religious awakening that led him to commit himself to the ministry. In 1836 Harrison joined the American Colonialization Society and enrolled in Gerrit Smith's manual labor school for blacks in Peterboro, New York. When the school folded a few months following his arrival, Harrison enrolled in the Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio, which was a center for anti-slavery activity and supported an interracial school. The college was at the center of debate between the Colonizationalists and the Abolitionists. It was during this period that Harrison became fully aware of the Abolition Movement. Disappointed with his education there, he returned to Philadelphia and resumed his shoemaking trade, where he became increasingly discouraged with race relations.

At the urging of a Peterboro classmate, Harrison, now married and with family, relocated to Newark, New Jersey where conditions were apparently better. It was in this city where he was trained and licensed to preach by the Newark Presbytery. The Second Congregational Church of Pittsfield was his first ministerial position, which he began in 1850 and with the exception a ten-year period of peregrinations during the Civil War period, it remained his congregation until his death in 1900. It was here that he established himself as

- an eloquent preacher of independence and self-worth to his African-American brethren
- a well-respected advocate for his community with the white establishment, including Massachusetts governors and the Lincoln administration in Washington, D.C.
- an ardent and outspoken abolitionist
- a source of encouragement for black soldiers in combat in the Civil War and chaplain of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment
- a tireless public speaker and journalist for the equality of races
- a role model for the dignity of African Americans

The house Samuel Harrison owned at 80 Third Street was his home from 1858 until his death, and in addition to being a landmark representing his place in history, it is architecturally significant as the representation of

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an African American's lifestyle and position in the community. Located in a working-class section of Pittsfield that was populated with a mix of immigrant and native groups during his occupancy, the house documents Harrison's integration in and interaction with white society. In addition, property and home ownership was an important status that Harrison urged the African-American community to acquire. He also used his personal experiences with his neighbors to formulate, as well as illustrate, his commentary on race relations. Harrison reflected on the comfort and stability he enjoyed in his domestic life in many of his sermons and essays, and he conveyed these values to his heirs, who continued to live in and around the house in the Third Street neighborhood long after his death.

The property is also significant as a distinctive example of progressive working class housing constructed during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in industrial towns like Pittsfield. Following published models and using modern and economical building methods, these affordable dwellings allowed poorer people, like Samuel Harrison, to own their own homes and live in greatly improved conditions. Similar to many other houses in its neighborhood, it also exemplifies the savings of mass-production in the construction of speculative housing for the lower classes. Harrison's association with this particular house provides a personal history that conveys a greater understanding of the design and function of these vernacular dwellings.

The Samuel Harrison House retains its integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association. Because of Samuel Harrison's broader associations with the Abolition Movement and Civil War participation, this property is nominated at a national level of significance, as well as the local and state levels. Born in slavery and actively involved in national events at numerous points in his life, Harrison is a figure whose story resonates with the African American experience throughout the United States.

*Rev. Samuel Harrison*

Samuel Harrison's life and work is well documented by a number of sermons and newspaper opinion pieces he wrote, as well as an autobiography he published in Pittsfield in the later years of his life. The record also includes his obituary and references in the published history of Pittsfield. He has also been the subject of at least one scholarly article, written by Williams College Professor Dennis Dickerson in a 1982 anthology titled Black Apostles at Home and Abroad; Afro-Americans and the Christian Mission from the Revolution to Reconstruction (see bibliography). A brief review of Harrison's life follows to establish his significance in history and document his association with the house.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Harrison was born in Philadelphia on April 15, 1818. His parents, William and Jennie Harrison, were slaves owned by the John Bolton family of Savannah, Georgia. Within three years of his birth, Samuel's father had died, and he and his mother moved north with the Boltons to New York City where they were manumitted. While in New York, Jennie Harrison remarried, although she continued to work as a

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<sup>1</sup> Dickerson's article and Samuel Harrison's autobiography are the principal sources for the overview.

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servant to the Boltons. In 1827 Samuel was apprenticed to an uncle in Philadelphia to learn the shoemaking trade. Although only nine years of age, it was deemed best to separate Samuel from his abusive, alcoholic step-father. The family situation became such that his mother joined him in Philadelphia shortly after. Samuel toiled for long hours at his shoemaker's bench and, as a young man, there was little else constructive to engage him in his spare time. He was motivated by his mother to seek membership in a church, and in 1835 he joined the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. While there, he decided to enter the ministry.

Samuel's religious awakening prompted him to seek a formal education. In 1836 he joined the American Education Society and enrolled in Garrit Smith's manual labor school in Peterboro, New York. This utopian interracial school folded within months of Samuel's arrival, and from there he sojourned to the Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio to resume his studies. From his recollections, his experience there was more labor than education, and after two frustrating years, he returned to Philadelphia and resumed working in the shoemaking trade there. Shortly after, Samuel met and married Ellen Rhodes, an orphan of slaves from Delaware. With these new responsibilities, he endeavored to set up his own shop and earn his living independently. Although he was successful financially, Samuel was not happy with race relations in Philadelphia. A classmate from the Peterboro school, E.P. Rogers, persuaded Samuel that the climate of tolerance in Newark, New Jersey was better, so he moved his business and family there in 1847. Rogers was a minister in a Presbyterian church for African Americans in Newark, and he helped Samuel prepare for the ministry. In 1848 Harrison was licensed to preach by the Newark Presbytery, an interim step to ordination. He traveled throughout New Jersey evangelizing. The following year, Rogers informed Samuel that the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts was seeking a minister to fill its pulpit and urged him to apply. The church offered Samuel the position, and in 1850 the Harrison family moved to Pittsfield.

The Berkshire Association of Congregational Ministers quickly ordained Samuel, and he set out to enlarge the small congregation and rebuild the sagging church. For the next eight years, the Harrisons lived in five rented rooms in one-half of a dwelling house on Third Street. Towards the end of 1852 he purchased a lot on Third Street for \$50 from Dr. John M. Brewster.<sup>2</sup> Brewster was a well-respected physician in Pittsfield who the *History of Pittsfield* described as an ardent abolitionist.<sup>3</sup> A review of deeds indexes reveals that he had bought numerous lots on Third and Fourth Streets in 1850, 1851, and 1852, the years the city was expanding into the area. Whether Brewster's motives were capitalist or altruistic is not known, but he clearly offered the Third Street property to Harrison on very favorable terms. Harrison paid only half of what the lot had cost Brewster in 1850, and according to Harrison, "I had not a dollar to pay on it, but I was given a deed by the

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<sup>2</sup> Berkshire County Deeds & Mortgages, Book 132, Page 411.

<sup>3</sup> On page 412 it is written: "Among the most active of the early anti-slavery men of Pittsfield, was Dr. John Milton Brewster, a son of Dr. Oliver Brewster, the surgeon of Col. Brown's regiment at Stone Arabia, and a descendant of Elder Brewster of the Plymouth Colony."

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man who owned it. After a while the church paid me some money and, as a first payment, I turned over to the owner of the lot forty dollars."<sup>4</sup> It might be surmised that Brewster extended similar deals to other African Americans, but although the coincidence of his real estate transactions and abolitionist activity warrants closer examination, census and directory records do not indicate that any black families except the Harrisons lived in the neighborhood.

It took five or six years for Samuel Harrison to afford to build a house. He had subdivided the lot in 1856 and sold the northern half to John Mehan for 50 dollars, but he finally had to rely on charity to achieve homeowner status.<sup>5</sup>

*I planted the lot year after year. But I was restless; I was paying rent but had nothing to show but receipts...So I went to the late Governor G.N. Briggs and stated to him my plan, which was to get four gentlemen to lend me two hundred dollars, fifty dollars to get the lumber, or part of it, on the ground, and I would give a lien on it, as I had secured a building lot. Without the least hesitation he said, 'I will loan you fifty dollars. Go among your abolition friends and secure the balance. '...I did go around and secured a nucleus in money for a home for my family. In the fall of 1858 we moved into a house we could call our own. I suppose I was in debt about one hundred and fifty dollars, to three persons fifty dollars each."<sup>6</sup>*

In 1860 he was able to secure a \$150 mortgage from the Berkshire County Savings Bank to pay off his personal debts from constructing the house.<sup>7</sup> This apparently early and unusual transaction between a bank and an African-American should be examined more closely in the context of antebellum race relations in Pittsfield. Of interest here is that Samuel Harrison treats the event matter-of-factly in his autobiography. Rather than considering his obtaining a bank mortgage as a landmark occurrence, he complained that it was a "financial blunder." He stated in his autobiography that he was unhappy in having to pay "not far from one hundred dollars of interest" to the bank.<sup>8</sup>

After finishing his own house, he turned his attention to the church, which had become quite dilapidated. "The building was almost flat on the ground; you could see the ground through the cracks in the floor." He challenged the congregation to raise \$100 among themselves, which he would match "among our friends out of town." A basement was built and finished under the church, where they held services until the sanctuary was renovated. New pews were installed, and the improvements "made our church more comfortable and really inviting."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Rev. Samuel Harrison, *His Life Story, As Told By Himself*. (1899) 21.

<sup>5</sup> Berkshire County Deeds & Mortgages, Book 152, Page 370.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. Samuel Harrison, *His Life Story, As Told By Himself*, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Berkshire County Deeds & Mortgages, Book 166, Page 41.

<sup>8</sup> 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

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Following an unexplained controversy within the Second Congregational Church, Samuel Harrison abruptly retired from the pulpit in 1862. He remained in Pittsfield and found employment with the National Freedmen's Relief Society to raise funds for freed slaves of the sea islands of South Carolina. In the following year, the legendary 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment, made up entirely of African Americans (except for their commander, R.G. Shaw), had met with disaster in the battle for Fort Wagner in South Carolina. Gov. John A. Andrew, who was visiting nearby Lenox to extend with his condolences to Shaw's widow, also arranged to meet with Samuel Harrison to request that he travel to South Carolina to express the sympathy of the Commonwealth to the survivors there. Harrison was apprehensive about traveling to the South, but he agreed. After a troubling trip where he was subjected to the prejudice of a racist ship captain, to which he devoted significant space in his autobiography, he discharged his duties honorably. This was one of the defining experiences of Samuel Harrison's life, and his mission elevated his status in the history of interracial relations in Massachusetts.

Within a few months, Gov. Andrew offered him a commission as the regiment's chaplain. Although he was feeling terribly vulnerable and homesick, he was honored by the request and returned to Massachusetts to accept the commission. His second trip, with the same captain, was not as trying as the first, which he again expounded upon in his autobiography. Harrison found it hard ministering to soldiers. He remarked on the futility of persuading idle soldiers of the sins of gambling and liquor. But he was more concerned with the racism he encountered in the Union Army. The issue revolved around a paymaster's refusal to issue his pay because of his being black. It was made all the more stressful because he felt responsible for getting money home to support his family in Pittsfield. Harrison appealed his case all the way to the White House, where a directive was finally issued to address this discrimination. He eventually received his pay, although at a lesser rate than white chaplains. The combination of this aggravation, homesickness, and squalid living conditions became manifested in illness, and in 1864 Samuel Harrison resigned his commission and returned home to Massachusetts, where he was granted an honorable discharge.

He resumed his work with the National Freedmen's Relief Society until the following year (1865) when he accepted a call to a Congregational church in Newport, Rhode Island. This move began the seven-year period where a seemingly disillusioned Harrison wandered from Pittsfield in search of a more satisfying religious vocation. During this period, however, he did not attempt to sell his Pittsfield home, as if he left there hoping to return. He found Newport "over churchd" (there were three African-American churches with congregations too small to support them) and having "too little spirituality."<sup>10</sup> One year later, he was in the pulpit of the Sanford Street Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. After three years in Springfield Harrison picked up roots again and moved to Portland, Maine and ministered to the Fourth Congregational Church there.

Samuel Harrison was a highly visible figure in the New England Congregational Church network, among

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<sup>10</sup> 36.

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black and white congregations alike, and, presumably, in the broader New England African-American community, as a whole. He was in great demand as a preacher, which is one reason why he was presented with so many inducements to move from church to church, but he also had a wide reputation as an orator and essayist in the cause of black advancement and race relations that made him a popular figure in abolitionist circles. He was quite successful in raising money for his home, his churches, and for the plight of freed and runaway slaves, and he personally attracted the charity of the white establishment. He seems to have had a remarkable charisma for both races; a model citizen in every regard.

Yet, Samuel Harrison was a frustrated man. For all his good work, he received little reward, financially or spiritually. His churches failed to pay him the modest salaries they promised, and his congregations were not spiritually rigorous enough for him. One reason he left the church in Newport, Rhode Island was that people in his congregation did not attend an important church meeting because of a social event. He found that he could not muster the self-discipline or commitment in them to work on their spiritual advancement and overcome race discrimination. Clearly he had unrealistic expectations that ultimately placed him at odds with his employers. Personally, he toiled long hours (he may have continued to supplement his income with shoe repair, wherever he went) and put his family at risk with his financial instability. He frequently needed to accept gifts of money and goods (white admirers in Springfield chipped in and bought him a new winter coat after noticing how threadbare his was), and this must have been humiliating for him, particularly as he grew older. This double standard that kept him trapped in a second-class, dependent position in society weighed heavy on him. Samuel Harrison and his family were still poor. The contradiction of his fame and his poverty would not have been lost on him, humble and pious as he was. Only his faith helped him keep perspective on his condition and gave him the patience to persevere.

In 1872 Harrison was invited to fill the pulpit of the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield once more, after a ten-year hiatus. By this time he was 54 years of age and ready to settle back in the city that gave him his start. For the next 28 years, until his death in 1900, he preached at the church and lived in the house he built on Third Street. He did not retire from the larger cause of civil rights, however. In 1874 he published a sermon he delivered entitled Pittsfield: Twenty-Five Years Ago, in which he documented the conditions of African Americans before the Civil War and reflected on the progress that had been made in race relations since. This is a rare and fascinating example of local history written from the perspective of a black man that embraces the success of the whole community but is tempered by his disappointment over the inequities. Next, Harrison published a second pamphlet, An Appeal of a Colored Man to his Fellow Citizens of a Fairer Hue in the United States (1877). In this more philosophical piece, he eloquently laid out his entire argument for the equality of the races. This was obviously his attempt to get his point of view and life's mission in some permanent form. This appeal was honed and practiced in years of sermons, lectures and debates over the previous thirty years. Like his history of Pittsfield, this essay is a significant expression of the African

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American voice. Samuel Harrison's remarkable writings culminated in the publication of his autobiography, Rev. Samuel Harrison, His Life Story, as Told by Himself, where he employed his personal experience to relate the human condition of African Americans in the United States.

Samuel Harrison died in 1900 at his home in Pittsfield. He was 82 years of age. Although he left a lasting record of his years of dedicated work to elevate the status of his race in the United States, Samuel quickly faded from public memory. His spirit and his accomplishments were remarkable in his time, and his eloquent voice provides invaluable insight into the thoughts and motivations of African Americans during a significant era of their history and of American history.

*The Samuel Harrison House*

When Samuel Harrison died in 1900, he left a rich legacy of wisdom and tolerance to his church, to the City of Pittsfield, and to the African American community at-large. However, he left his family virtually penniless, with the exception of the house on Third Street. This house was his only material possession of any significance and one he obviously valued considerably. Perhaps more than any other of his many accomplishments, his house was the one immutable object that rooted him to a place and to his image of equality. In a society where home ownership was beyond the reach of, and often denied to, his race, the house was highly symbolic. And if he could provide his family with little else, he must have been content that he had provided them with a place to live and call their own.

It is difficult to discern, however, how the house functioned for his family. In all his writings, particularly his autobiography, Harrison's family is conspicuously absent. As a result, little is known about it, and there are numerous voids and contradictions regarding his personal past. In his autobiography, he mentions getting married to Ellen Rhodes from Delaware around 1840 (he does not mention a specific date). His will, written in 1893, identifies Sarah Jane as his widow. Harrison never said what became of his first wife or when he married his second. Ellen was still recorded as his wife in the 1880 U.S. Census; Sarah is listed as such in 1900. The 1855 U.S. Census names four children born between 1843 and 1854: Jane, Gerrit, Ellen and Mary. Jane and Gerrit were gone from the household in 1880. Mary apparently died young; she was not listed with the family in the 1860 census. Daughter Ellen remained in the household through the 1880 census where, at age 28 years, her occupation is listed as dressmaker. Three entirely different children are named in Samuel Harrison's will: Lydia and George, who shared in the inheritance of the house, and Grace, who was deceased at the time of Samuel's death in 1900. While he alluded to children of his who had died, he never mentioned them by name or number. The only time he talks about his children is in the context of race relations. For example, he stated in his autobiography that when he left the church in Portland Maine to return to Pittsfield in 1872, a daughter (probably Ellen) was left behind to be able to finish high school there, since the interracial relations in the school were positive. Harrison reflected on the hardships his family encountered, but he neither dwelt on them nor personalized the situation.

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Certain aspects of his home life can be deduced from the available information about his work and family and from the house itself, which is essentially intact to the period of his lifetime. There are three rooms on the ground floor that are interpretable. The main entrance opens into a large room on the south side of the house likely served as the principal living space for the family. This was the central, heated space on this level of the house. It could have served a range of purposes from cooking (although there was a kitchen below it), eating, family activities and informal entertaining. Samuel Harrison would have devoted much of his leisure time at home to his shoe repair business, and it is likely he would have wanted to do at least some of that work in the midst of his family, even if he had made space for it somewhere else in the house as well. It is also probable that his wife brought work into the house (e.g., sewing, washing, ironing) to augment their income. (Their daughter Ellen was noted to be a dressmaker in the 1880 census.) Thus, it is expected that there were work activities occurring at in this living room. West of it, in the front of the house, was the parlor, which had a restricted use, particularly in the tradition of clergy needing a private space in their home for meetings and counseling. Three large windows and a mantelpiece distinguished the space. There was possibly wallpaper and other decorative flourishes in the room during Harrison's occupancy. North of the main living room was a simple bedchamber that was likely used by the Samuel and his wife. The chimney stack occupied a corner of the room, and it would have helped warm the space.

Presently the second floor contains three bedchambers, and in Samuel Harrison's time, there could have been as many as four. Providing this much personal space for his children was an extraordinary luxury for the period. Unlike many other families, black or white, the Harrisons did not share their house with older generations, extended families, domestics, or boarders. With the four children identified in the 1860 U.S. Census, and his wife, Ellen, Samuel Harrison lived very comfortably, even though he worked very hard to achieve it. Another advantage to the house was that the basement contained habitable space because the sloping terrain of the site exposed it to the air in the southeast corner. This room is still intact as a kitchen space. It communicated with another finished room in the northeast corner of the house of undetermined function. The subterranean room in the front (west) of the basement was not habitable and likely used for storage of provisions and kitchen equipment. Samuel Harrison wrote that he maintained a garden on the property. During harvest, a substantial amount of space would have been needed for food preserved for the winter. An appendage once extended from the rear of the house, and it is possible that food-producing animals, such as poultry, a cow, and even swine, were penned there or elsewhere on the property.

The house provides important evidence concerning the way working-class people occupied their homes and used their urban lots to support their families. Some were owners and others were renters, but the nature of their housing was single-family residences, not tenements. Census records and directories indicate that families often shared their houses with family and strangers, and that crowded conditions prevailed. Still, there was this suburban aspect to the neighborhood with its detached houses and food-producing yards. The presence of relatives and different generations on the street indicates a cohesiveness in the community stemming from a lack of mobility. And even though the Harrisons were long a part of the community, they

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were treated with prejudice by most of their neighbors. Samuel Harrison often used the example of the hatred "Celtic" people displayed for African Americans, both from his youth in Philadelphia (it was this kind of harassment that drove him to Newark) and in Pittsfield.

There was no centralized African American community in Pittsfield. Black citizens were scattered all over the town, living where they were allowed and where they could afford. Even after slavery was abolished, many African Americans lived as domestics with white families or as laborers in businesses where they also resided, such as liverys. Whatever status they had achieved as skilled workers was diminished when the flood of white immigrants began arriving from Europe and immediately assumed a higher position in the social hierarchy simply due to their common race. However, even in large cities, homogeneous ethnic communities or ghettos were not common. Small industrial towns like Pittsfield, all cultural groups, including African Americans, were mixed up and spread out throughout the residential districts affordable to them. The boundaries between working-class and middle-class districts were indistinct, as well. While social stratification was common, it was not uniformly expressed in the urban environment. Such distinctions were often vague on the streets; community was more of a mental than a physical construction. As was the case with the Second Congregational Church, religious, ethnic, and racial groups and economic classes tended to identify with and assemble around landmarks and institutions more than areas. Finding a home was more random in terms of what was available and met the budget and taste of the buyer/renter.

Samuel Harrison ended up on Third Street because he found a part of a house he could afford to rent, and it was close to his church. There were no other black families there, nor was there a black neighborhood to seek out. (It is not likely that he would have approved of a segregated community.) He later bought a plot of land down the street because it was available on terms he could afford. Still later he built a house. His affinity to his neighbors probably had little to do with any of these decisions. There is nothing in the design or plan of the house that associates it with the African American experience (or any other) except for their aspiration to have a house and live comfortably and, in the case of Samuel Harrison, their occasional ability to achieve it. Harrison's presence on Third Street embodies his ideal of functioning in an integrated society where white and black coexisted in equal conditions if not on equal terms.

The design of the house itself is sophisticated, if simplified, and it is directly related to the large and diverse group of professionally-built small houses that proliferated in small industrial cities like Pittsfield in the antebellum period. The builder was either utilizing published plans and building specifications for the building, or had developed his own standardized approach to house construction. One such pattern book was J.H. Hammond's The Farmer's and Mechanic's Practical Architect and Guide in Rural Economy published in Boston in 1858. In it Design No. III bears a remarkable similarity to the Harrison house. (FIG. 3) The fact that at least four other houses in view of the Samuel Harrison House are virtually identical to it in their design indicates that an established plan was implemented. In his autobiography, Harrison mentions a contractor and builder, Abraham Burbank, who contributed 50 dollars to the building fund for his house, but he does not

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credit him with the work. The house was thoughtfully designed and carefully constructed, and it represents the transition of house construction from a craft to a trade. It utilized industrial, machine-produced materials; hand-crafting is nowhere evident except in the hewn sills. And it was built by carpenters rather than joiners. The entire building is nailed together. Nevertheless, this changing situation allowed for better-built, affordable housing for the growing American urban population. Paradoxically, yet significantly, this modest house was still beyond the economic reach of African Americans in the antebellum period.

Since it is a detached dwelling, all four exterior facades were components in the design. Still, this was a working-class house so the form, materials, design, and construction of the house were consciously economical. The house was built close enough to the north lot line (and a neighboring house) that the north side is essentially blank with only two windows per floor. The street side is symmetrically organized in a traditional townhouse manner with two window bays and a side entrance, but the main mass of the façade narrows to two bays with the entrance inserted into the end of a one-story side porch. With a large yard on the south side of the house, the south wall is as visible and prominent as the street façade. Like the front, fenestration is orderly and balanced, and the wall is enriched by the step-back from the porch to the second floor. The small open porch, which had a thin balustrade, adds still more visual interest. The sloping terrain gradually exposes the cut-stone basement until the height of the wall reaches a full three stories at the eastern end. Both west and south facades are tastefully ornamented with broad fascias and projecting cornices in a restrained but distinctive Greek Revival style. The entry to the house is contained in a solid wall built across the west end of the porch distinguished by fully developed Greek details, a half-pediment and a Doric pillar. The rear wall is the largest (three stories plus the attic) but plainest of all. No ornament embellishes the roofline, and the window pattern is irregular. An outbuilding was abutted to the north side of the wall, and its gable roof reached up to the first floor level. The design of this back section of the house reflects its utilitarian milieu and was undecorated.

The plan of the house cleverly incorporates space from the rear section of the porch to enlarge the interior of the living space on the warm south side while maintaining the upright-and-wing form on the exterior. Asymmetrically arranged, the plan provides space for formal and informal living functions on the first floor, as well as a bedchamber. These fundamental spaces are arranged effectively and economically. The entrance opens on the common room, while access to the parlor and chamber is controlled. The two rooms with the most constant use are connected directly to the chimney for heat, and they are secluded in the rear of the house. The occasional-use parlor is placed prominently in the front of the house, but it also screened the living spaces from the noise and attention of the street. It is no coincidence that the parlor has the most windows and occupied the portion of the house with the most formally designed and organized architectural elements. Separate and personalized bedchambers had become common in small houses in the nineteenth century, and Harrison's house was no exception. This was a direct application the popular model for middle-

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and working-class housing of the period as traditional, vernacular house plans were undergoing radical improvements in space and comfort. Similarly, service areas of the house were restricted to the basement reflecting the ideal separation of roles and functions within the house.

Thus, in addition to being significant for its associations with the Rev. Samuel Harrison as a significant historical figure, the house is also a notable landmark of this African-American family's place in and interaction with white society in Pittsfield both before and after the Civil War. Coupled with the corpus of material about Samuel Harrison, the presence of this house in the physical and documentary context of the city presents an opportunity for an intensive examination of the multi-cultural and multi-class composition of Pittsfield's 19<sup>th</sup>-century population and its expression on the urban landscape. The house is also significant as a distinctive example of the domestic architecture built for working-class people in Pittsfield during the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century. It has a clear relationship to model plans and designs published and disseminated among builders of the period, which represents the emergence of house-building from local traditional craft practice into a broader conception of architectural, technological and construction procedure. Its distinguishing utilization of vertical plank construction, which in this case can be viewed as a precursor of balloon framing, appears exceptional but with further study of Pittsfield's 19<sup>th</sup>-century housing stock, may represent a much larger and informative phenomenon. Samuel Harrison's family life was played out in these spaces, and the house survives as a rich resource for interpreting the life of an African American family during a crucial period in American history.

*History of the House after Samuel Harrison*

Samuel Harrison subdivided his lot in 1888 and gave the back half of it to his daughter, Lydia, around the time of her marriage to James Jacobs.<sup>11</sup> The deed stated that it was "for her sole and separate use and free from the control of her husband." It does not appear that Samuel Harrison held a grudge against his son-in-law, who was a hard-working man and an officer of the Second Congregational Church; perhaps, it was his way of ensuring his daughter received the benefit of his gift directly. Lydia and James Jacobs cosigned mortgages on the property. Lydia A. Jacobs obtained her first mortgage from the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank in 1892. She borrowed \$650 presumably to build a house on the lot she received from her father. However, it was not until 1899 that the city directory indicates the Jacobses residing at a separate address than Lydia's parents at 80 Third Street. In that year the Jacobses' house on the rear of the lot was identified as #80 and Harrison's house on the front lot was renumbered #82. (The numbering of the front has been returned to #80.)

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<sup>11</sup> Berkshire County Deeds & Mortgages, Book 268:381.

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When Samuel Harrison died in 1900, his remaining real estate was conveyed to Lydia and her brother, George B. Harrison, a barber who lived independently on Cherry Street. The house and lot were appraised at \$1500.<sup>12</sup> George conveyed his share to Lydia and James Jacobs in 1901, who then owned the two lots and two houses outright.<sup>13</sup> (It would have been about this time that George moved to Newark, New Jersey – where his father had first entered the ministry – where he appears in the 1910 and 1920 censuses. In 1930 he was widowed and living with his sister back in Pittsfield.) The property remained in Lydia Jacobs' possession until she died in 1954. During the more than 50-year period, the Jacobs negotiated a dozen mortgages with the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank to modify and improve both houses.<sup>14</sup> Many of the changes observed in Samuel Harrison's house were undertaken in this period, such as new flooring, ceiling overlays, window replacement (two-pane sashes substituted for six-pane sashes), door replacements, kitchen relocation and bathroom construction. The mortgages distinguish between houses, so there were renovations occurring in both places. The Jacobs continued to live in the rear house. When Samuel Harrison's widow, Sarah Jane, moved to Springfield, the homestead was rented.<sup>15</sup> In 1915 the city directory identified Mrs. Mary E. Kennedy as living at 82 Third Street, while Lydia and James Jacobs were listed as living at 80 Third Street along with three grown children recorded as boarders.

Lydia A. Jacobs died a widow in 1954 leaving a will that left her father's house to two of her children, Bessie H. Jacobs and Harrison B. Jacobs, and left her house to three others, Ariel Dillard, Bertrand C. Jacobs, and Florence Edmonds.<sup>16</sup> The older Samuel Harrison house was valued at \$3,500, and the newer house Lydia Jacobs built, described as a two-family dwelling house, was valued at \$4,500. The 1955 city directory listed Bessie H. Jacobs in residence at 82 Third Street and tenants in the rear house. Bessie H. Jacobs conveyed her grandfather's house and the westerly half of his lot to her sister Florence Edmonds's daughter and son-in-law, Ruth and Hugh Hill in 1955.<sup>17</sup> The easterly parcel remained with Lydia Jacobs's heirs. The Hills mortgaged the property with the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank and they continued to own the property until 2004 when they sold it to the City of Pittsfield, which will preserve the historic property and the memory of Samuel Harrison.

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<sup>12</sup> Berkshire County Surrogates Records, File #20936.

<sup>13</sup> Berkshire County Deeds and Mortgages, Book 303, Page 538.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to the first one already mentioned, see Berkshire County Deeds and Mortgages Book 300, Page 472 (1901); 321:77 (1903); 321:221 (1904); 336:297 (1908); 372:247 (1914); 388:85 (1916); 401:245 (1923); 418:102 (1924); 418:408 (1926); 440:459 (1930); 590:134 (1952). In 1925, the Jacobs also made a transaction with Ella G. Waddock where the property was conveyed to Waddock and returned in the same day, perhaps to cover debts accrued, although the meaning of the action is unclear. See see Berkshire County Deeds and Mortgages Book 419, Page 515 (1925) and 420:421 (1925).

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Harrison was recorded as boarding in a house in Springfield in the 1910 U.S. Census.

<sup>16</sup> Berkshire County Surrogates Records, File #61537.

<sup>17</sup> Berkshire County Deeds & Mortgages, Book 625, Pages 436 & 437.

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## Historic Integrity

The Samuel Harrison House is sufficiently intact to represent the home of this significant African American figure of the City of Pittsfield and the State of Massachusetts. It retains the significant characteristics of its form, plan, construction methods and use of materials. As such, the house is clearly distinguishable as the dwelling built for Rev. Harrison in 1858 and as the home in which he resided until his death in 1900. The most serious non-historic alteration to have occurred since this period is the replacement of wood frame windows with metal sashes; however, the window openings and trim are intact and could be restored based on original window material still in the house. The main entrance to the house has also been replaced with modern materials, but the same reversibility applies in this case. The house is presently uninhabited and has been vandalized (windows have been broken). The roof on the porch extension has failed and water has damaged interior plaster finishes, but the house remains in stable structural condition. (A temporary roof has been installed to protect the house until a restoration plan can be developed and implemented.) It would be economically feasible to restore the building, and there is more than enough historic material to associate it with Samuel Harrison and interpret his significance in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Pittsfield.

## Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important social, cultural, and economic information associated with African Americans in Massachusetts during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century and their relationship to the larger immigrant and native working class community. Historical research combined with archaeological survey and testing may locate structural evidence of the house built by Harrison's daughter to the rear of the property. Additional evidence may also exist from the ell originally attached to the rear of the Harrison House. Similar research may also locate structural evidence of outbuildings associated with both the Harrison House and the house built by his daughter. Careful identification and mapping of structural evidence associated with both residences and outbuildings may contribute design evidence individually or together that associates the houses or compound with the African American experience. Archaeological resources may contribute additional evidence in the design or plan of the homes that are lacking with the extant Harrison House alone or without outbuildings.

Historical research combined with archaeological survey and testing may contribute important evidence related to the way working-class people and specifically African Americans occupied their homes and used their urban lots to support their families. Harrison rarely discussed his family and their activities at the house in his writings. Detailed analysis of the contents of occupational related features may contribute important social, cultural, and economic evidence of the individuals and their activities that occurred in the house and in the surrounding yard. Important archaeological information may survive that documents Africanisms and other evidence of the African American experience that are not reflected in design or plan of the Harrison House. Archaeological research may also document the economic function and food-producing role of rooms in the Harrison House, his daughter's house and the yards they may have shared or used independently. Excavations n

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the basement of the Harrison House may locate artifact or macrobotanical, or faunal evidence that documents the function specific areas may have served in food production or food preservation for the winter. Archaeological evidence may also exist that indicated Harrison conducted some level of shoemaking activity at his home to supplement his liturgical income and backyard food production. It is known that Harrison planted the Third Street lot for years before the construction of his house. Agricultural related outbuildings may have preceded the house and remained after construction. Macro botanical and faunal evidence may exist that documents the types of plants grown on the property and food-producing animals that were raised. Urban food production, preparation and related diet may contribute an important aspect of the African American urban experience not evident with the design or plan of the Harrison House.

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- Pittsfield City Directories, 1868-1955.
- Smith, J.E.A. History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County) Massachusetts From the Year 1800 to the Year 1876. Springfield, MA: C.W. Bryan and Co., 1876.
- United States Census. Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Population Schedules. 1860, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

(end)

Samuel Harrison House  
Name of Property

Berkshire, MA  
County, State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 18      844320      4701180  
Zone      Easting      Northing

2.  
Zone      Easting      Northing

3.  
Zone      Easting      Northing

4.  
Zone      Easting      Northing

   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 By

name/title Neil Larson, consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February 2006

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

#### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Samuel Harrison Society c/o Linda M. Tyer

street & number 86 Ventura Avenue telephone 413-442-5221

city or town Pittsfield state MA zip code 01201

**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 the 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

**Samuel Harrison House  
Pittsfield (Berkshire), MA**

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel measuring 66 feet on its east and west (street) ends and 150 feet along the sides. It comprises two lots. See attached tax parcel map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary contains the entire parcel Samuel Harrison purchased in 1852 and on which his house was built in 1858. In 1888, this parcel was subdivided into two lots and a second house built by the family. The lots have remained in the ownership in the family until the City of Pittsfield purchased them in 2004. The nominated parcel provides an authentic historic setting for the house.

(end)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Date: 2004**

**Photographer: Neil Larson**

**Negatives at Pittsfield Historical Commission**

1. House from SW
2. house from NW
3. House from SE
4. Detail of plank construction, east facade

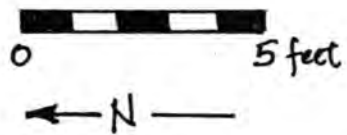
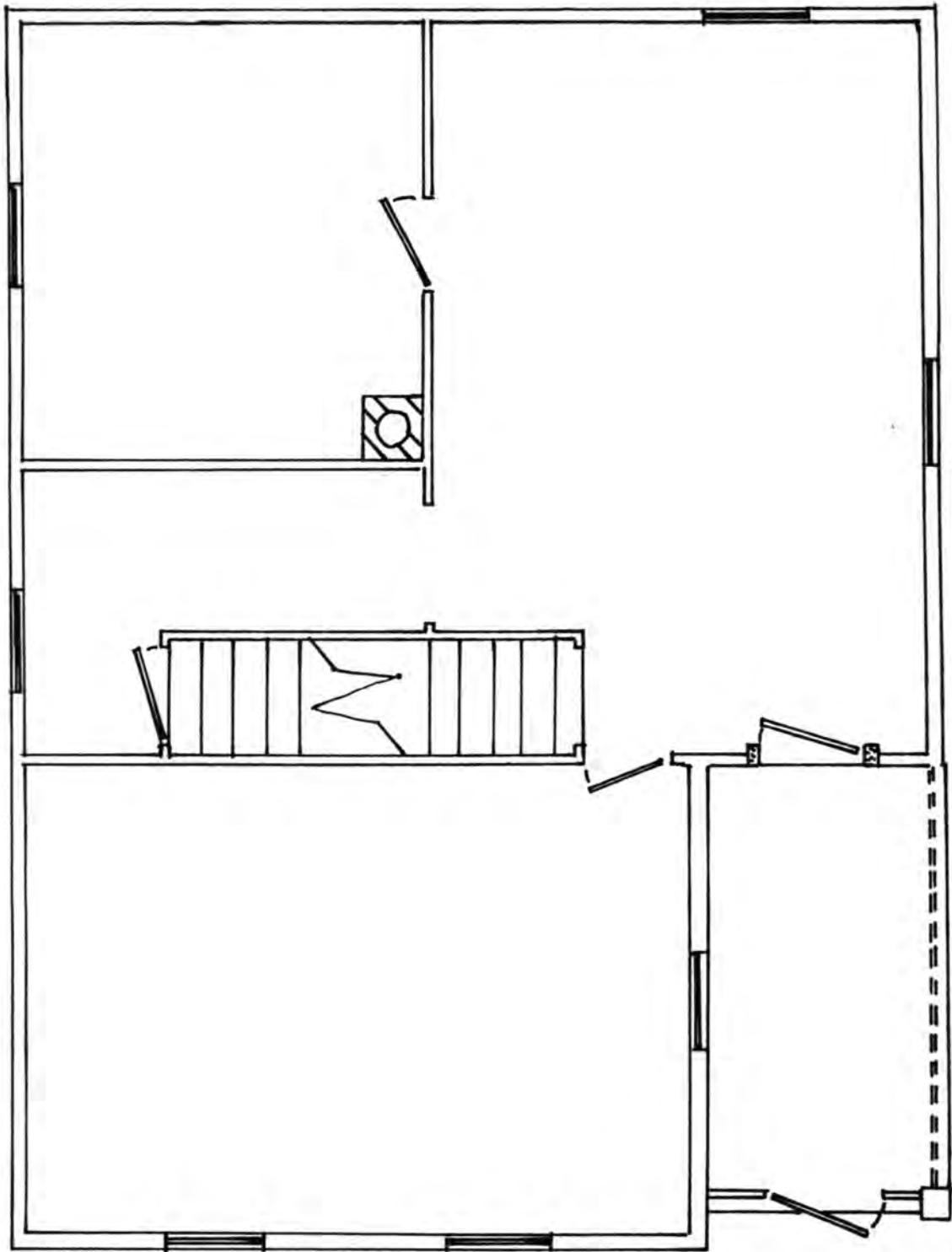


FIG. 1

SAMUEL HARRISON HOUSE  
80 THIRD ST., PITTSFIELD, MA

FIRST FLOOR, EXISTING CONDITIONS  
drawn by Neil Larson, Sept. 1999

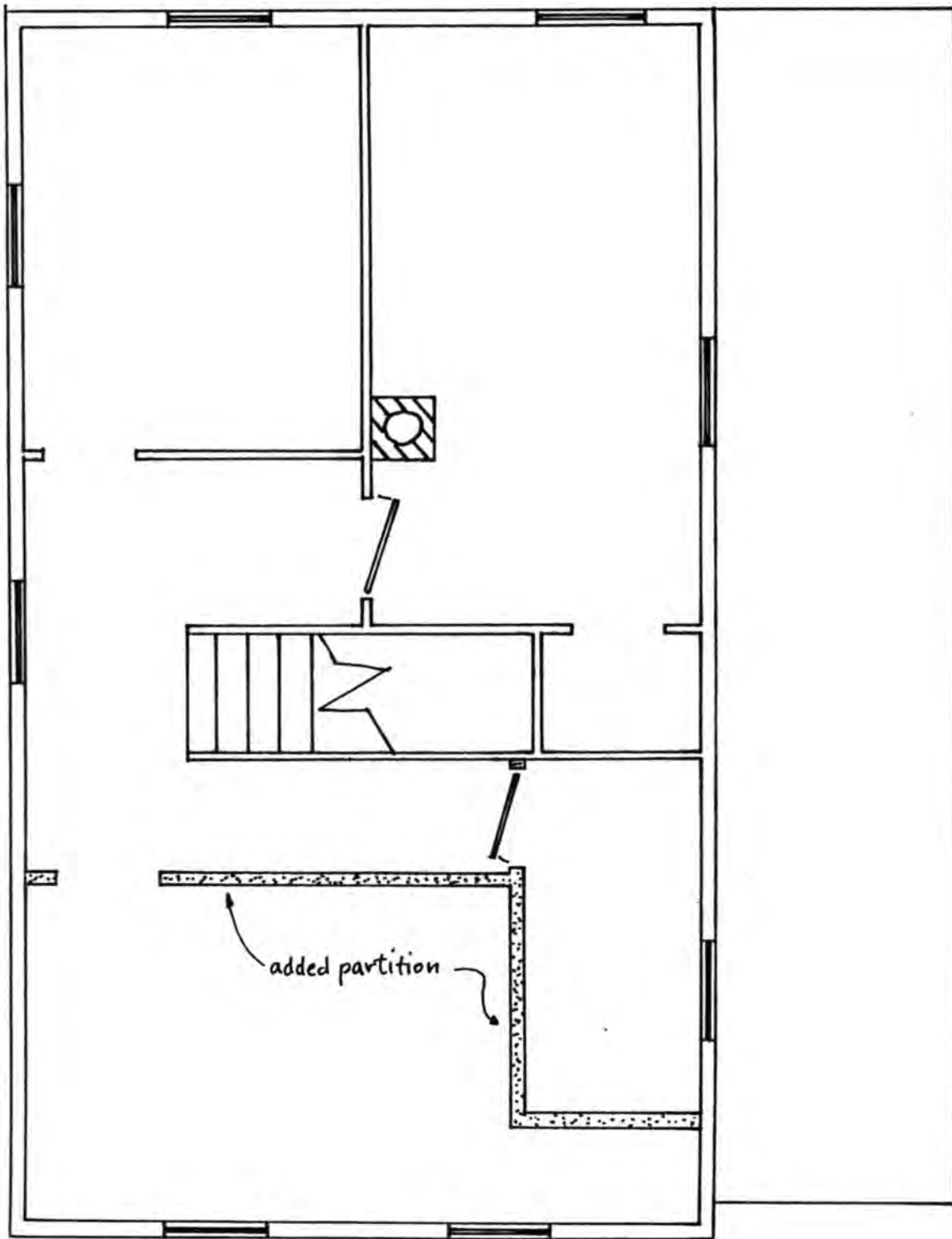


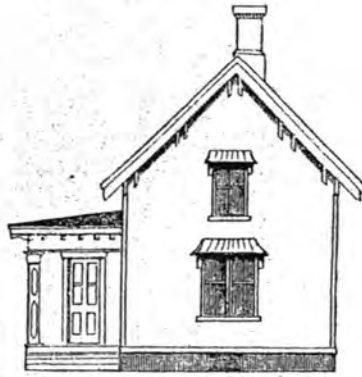
FIG. 2

SAMUEL HARRISON HOUSE  
80 THIRD ST., PITTSFIELD, MA

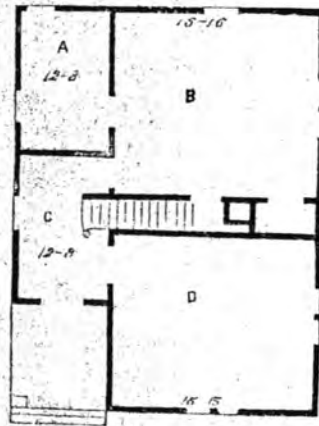
SECOND FLOOR, EXISTING CONDITIONS  
drawn by Neil Larson, Sept. 1999

Samuel Harrison House  
80 Third Street  
Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., MA

DESIGN, No. III.



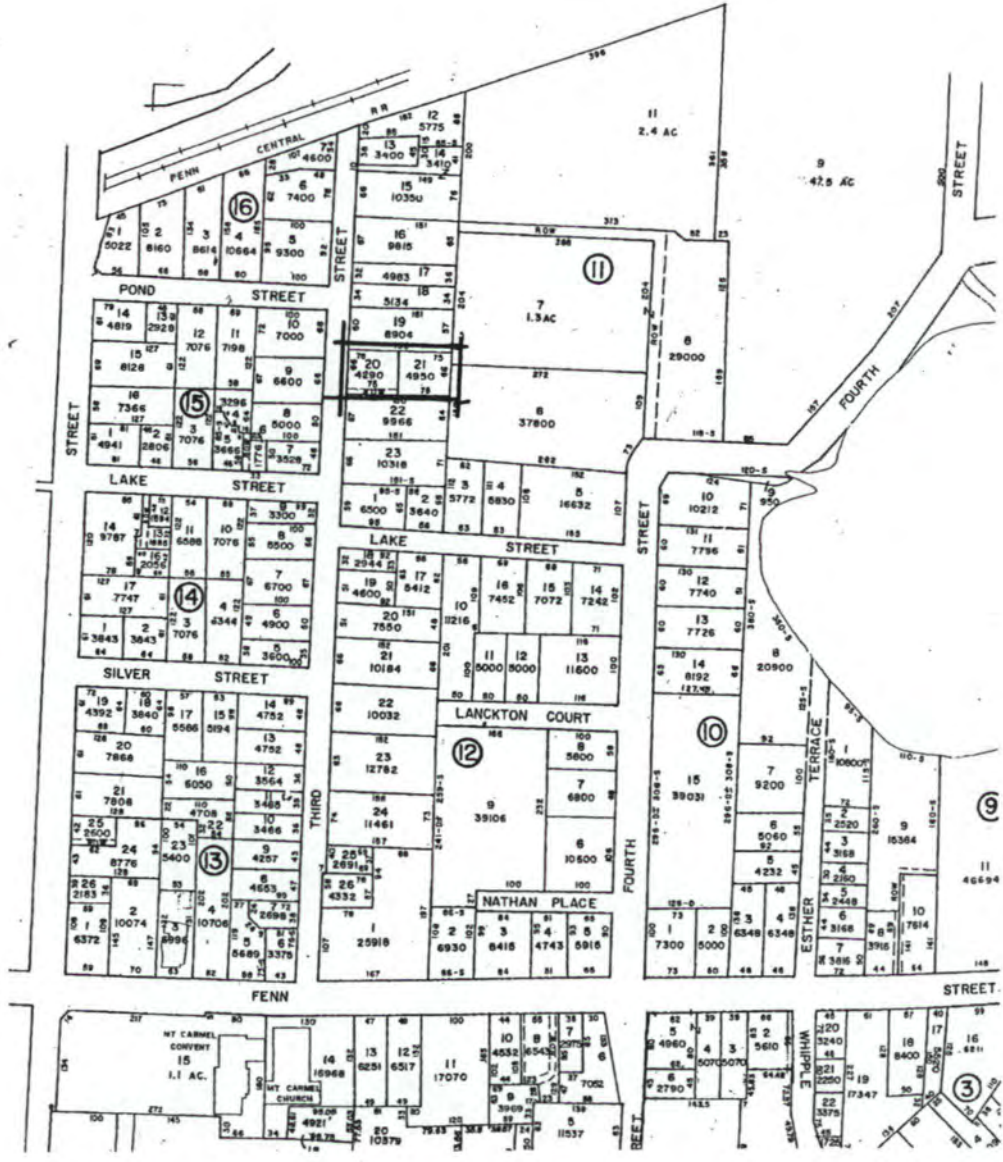
PLAN.



A. Store Room, B, Living Room. C, Front Entry.. D, Parlor.

FIG. 3

From J.H. Hammond, The Farmer's and Mechanic's Practical Architect (Boston, 1858).



Samuel Harrison House  
 80 Third Street  
 Pittsfield, Berkshire County, MA

Boundary Map  
 Parcel Nos. 109-0011-020 & 021

Source: City of Pittsfield Tax Map

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 06000147 Date Listed: 03/22/2006

Harrison, Samuel, House  
Property Name

Berkshire  
County

MA  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

3/22/2006  
Date of Action

=====  
=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**3. Level of Significance**

Accepted as significant Statewide and locally only. See attached National Register review comment.

**5. Ownership**

Correct owner type as 'public-State'

**8. Areas of Significance**

Clarify Ethnic Heritage: Black  
Remove Military as an area of significance. See attached National Register review comment.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Harrison, Samuel, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 2/07/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/03/06  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/18/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/23/06  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000147

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: Y NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 3/22/2006 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Property is nominated for national significance, but this level is not justified. See attached SLR.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Bic

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 3/22/2006

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS. <sup>632</sup>



Samuel Harrison House  
80 Third St.  
Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2004  
Neg. at Pittsfield Historical Comm.

Photo 1: House from SW



Samuel Harrison House  
80 Third St.  
Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2004  
Neg. at Pittsfield Historical Comm.

PHOTO 2: House from NW



Samuel Harrison House  
80 Third St.  
Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2004  
Neg. at Pittsfield Historical Comm.

PHOTO 3: House from SE



Samuel Harrison House

80 Third St.

Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2004

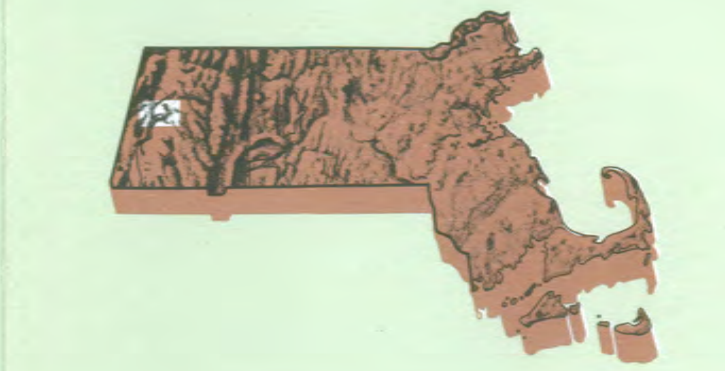
Neg. at Pittsfield Historical Comm.

PHOTO 4: Detail of plank construction,  
east facade



# Pittsfield East

MASSACHUSETTS  
1:25 000-scale metric  
topographic map



### 7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey  
1997

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Derived from imagery taken 1981 and other sources. Photostereoscopic imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1984. Boundaries revised 1999. Supersedes Pittsfield East and Peru 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1973.  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1000-meter grid. Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18 19 000-foot ticks. Massachusetts coordinate system, standard zone North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 6 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER  
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

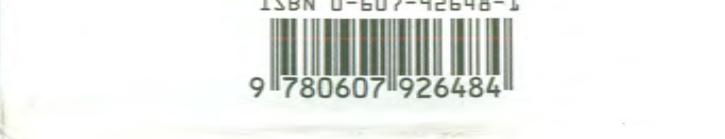
Meters	Feet
1	3.2808
2	6.5617
3	9.8425
4	13.1234
5	16.4043
6	19.6852
7	22.9660
8	26.2469
9	29.5278
10	32.8084

UTM grid convergence (CM) at center of map	UTM grid convergence (IN) at center of map
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000
0.0000	0.0000

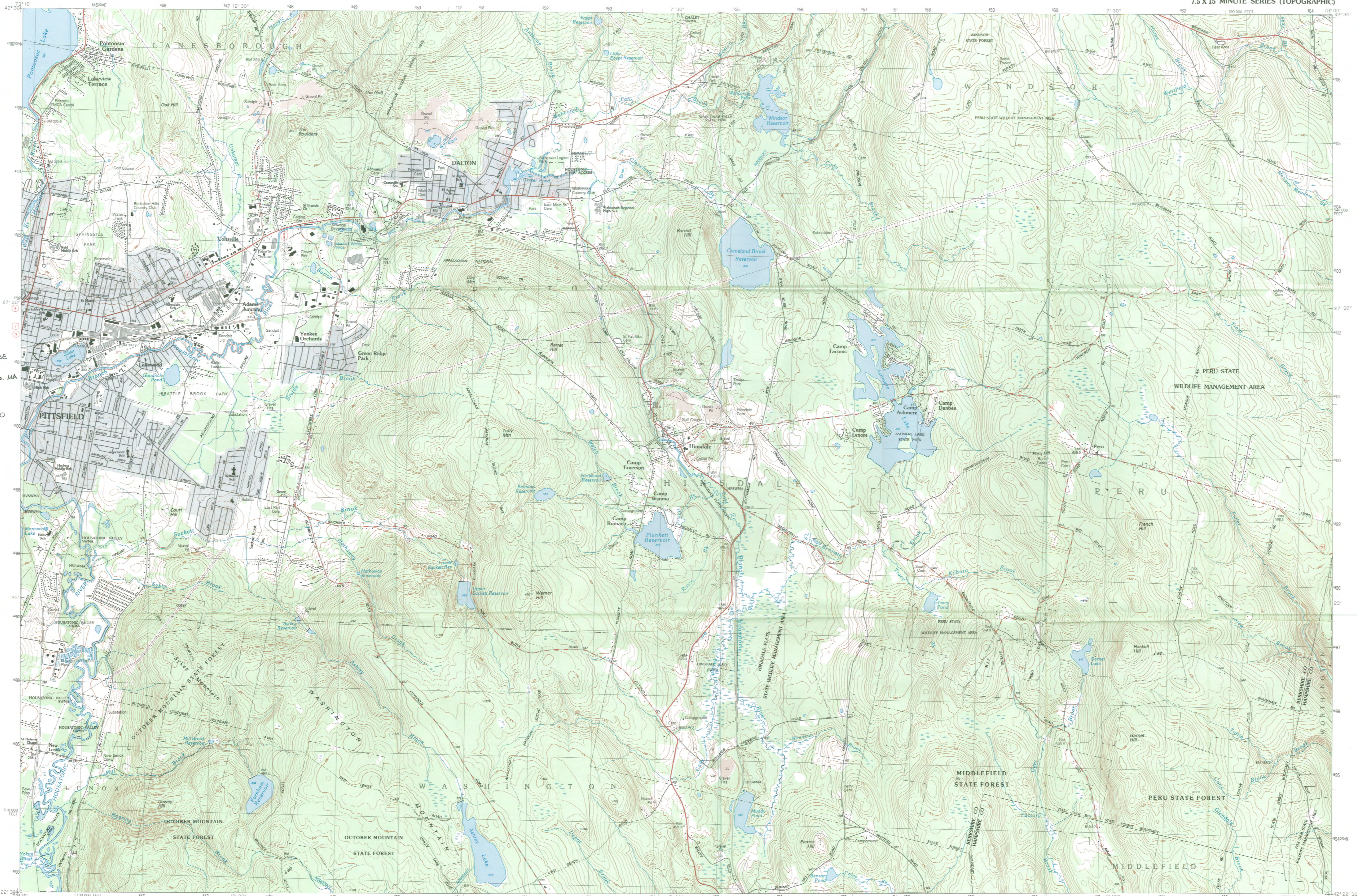
ADJACENT MAPS	1	2	3
1	Stephens Center		
2	Cheshire		
3	Ashfield		
4	Pittsfield West		
5	Greenfield		
6	Stockbridge		
7	East Lee		
8	Chester		



### Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road, trail
- Route marker: Interstate, U.S., State
- Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
- Bridge, drawbridge
- Footbridge, overpass, underpass
- Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Boundary:
  - National, with monument
  - State
  - County, parish
  - Civil township, precinct, district
  - Incorporated city, village, town
  - National or State reservation; small park
  - Land grant with monument; found section corner
  - U.S. public lands survey; range, township, section
  - Range, township, section line location approximate
  - Fence or field line
  - Power transmission line, located tower
  - Dam; dam with lock
  - Canalway; grave
  - Compartiment; siltic area; U.S. location monument
  - Windmill; water well; spring
  - Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
  - Control: horizontal station; vertical station; approximate
  - Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
  - Distorted surface: strip mine, levee, sand
  - Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
  - Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
  - Rapids; large and small; falls, large and small
  - Swamp; marsh
  - Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation
  - Woodland: scattered trees
  - Scrub; mangrove
  - Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
1997



SAMUEL HARRISON HOUSE  
80 Third Street  
Pittsfield, Berkshire Co. MA  
  
UTM REFERENCES  
18 244320 4701180



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

February 3, 2006

Dr. John Roberts, Acting Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Dr. Roberts:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Samuel Harrison House, 80 Third Street, Pittsfield (Berkshire), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. We request expedited review of this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Hon. John W. Olver  
Hon. James M. Ruberto, Mayor, City of Pittsfield  
Rebecca Smith, Pittsfield Historical Commission  
Neil Larson, consultant  
Mrs. Ruth Hill  
State Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.  
Linda Tyer, Samuel Harrison Society  
Deanna Ruffor, Community Development Director

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**

Property Name: Samuel Harrison House (Berkshire County) Massachusetts  
Reference Number: 06000147  
Date: March 22, 2006

Comments on nomination accepted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places

This property is nominated under National Register Criteria B and C for national, state, and local significance. However, the nomination does not make the case for national significance. Where Harrison certainly participated in a social/political phenomenon of national import, it is not clear that his personal contribution affected events on a national scale. The citations and bibliography provided do not indicate that scholarship would identify Harrison as having a national impact on social and political debates of race relations during the period of significance. His most active years as an orator/preacher (1862-1872), and then as writer on the subject of race relations (1870s), do not occur during the abolition movement (as indicated Sec. 8., p. 6), but rather during Reconstruction.

In the context of the Reconstruction years, and the affects on the social and economic welfare of African Americans and upon race relations more widely in the United States during this era, Harrison is an excellent example to illustrate these issues. Further, the experiences of Harrison are uniquely important to reflect the affects of social and economic forces on an educated African American in the north, whereas scholarship has largely focused on the experiences of southern blacks in this period. The property does convey the context as described in this nomination, but Harrison's impact as a speaker on the New England circuit and as a writer seem limited to that region. The property is significant under Criterion B for its association with Samuel Harrison (1818-1900), an African American clergyman who contributed an important voice to the debates over issues of race relations in the city of Pittsfield and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and under Criterion C as a distinctive example of progressive working class housing constructed during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in an industrial town. The property retains integrity to the period of significance 1858-1900.

The nomination indicates Areas of Significance to include Military history. However, the statement of significance demonstrates Harrison's involvement with the 54<sup>th</sup> regiment was more social or religious in its nature, and that he does not appear to have had a significant impact on military history. Therefore, Military is removed as an Area of Significance.

Michèle Gates Moresi  
Historian, National Register of Historic Places

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



06 00047  
OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

Samuel Harrison House  
Pittsfield (Berkshire) MA

Section number 10 Page 1

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The coordinates originally provided for the Samuel Harrison House were 18 844320 4701180. The correct location is 125 miles west of this point at **18 644320 4701180** (North American Datum 1927).

Corrected March 2009

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Harrison, Samuel, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000147

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                      DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Additional Documentation Approved**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER E. Beall

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE                     

DATE 12.9.11

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 20, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Re: Additional Documentation (Technical corrections of UTM's)

In the process of mapping National Register nominations for our GIS database, we have identified errors in UTM coordinates for 23 properties. The errors vary from a few hundred feet to hundreds of miles, often due to transposition of numbers.

As recommended by Edson Beall, we are enclosing a continuation sheet for each of the nominations. Please let me know if you need more information in order to correct your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures