

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

JUL 6 1982

## 1. Name

historic Becket Center Historic District

and/or common same

## 2. Location

street & number Route 8, <sup>MA</sup> Y.M.C.A. Road and <sup>and Y.M.C.A.</sup> Hamilton Roads N/A not for publication

city, town Becket N/A vicinity of congressional district first

state Massachusetts code 025 county Berkshire code 003

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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 Multiple - see attached list

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Central Berkshire Registry of Deeds

street & number 24 Wendell Avenue

city, town Pittsfield state MA

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Assets of the  
title Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town 294 Washington St. Boston state MA

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date

N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Becket Center Historic District continues to reflect the rural character of the surrounding Berkshire Mountains, as well as its abbreviated role as the town's main settlement center. It encompasses approximately 40 acres of gently rolling land crossed from north to south by Walker Brook. Route 8 and Hamilton Road also run north to south through the district and are connected by Y.M.C.A. Road. The district contains nine buildings, one structure, three unexcavated historic archaeological sites, a parade ground or common, and a cemetery, all located along the three major roads. Although recently much of the center, once cleared for agriculture and the charcoaling industry, has reverted to brush and forest, the sides of roads and the back-field lines are marked by stone walls, clearly revealing the agricultural nature of early occupation.

Federal and Greek Revival period farmhouses and public buildings define the architectural character of the district. In addition, two late nineteenth century civic buildings built on the sites of earlier structures reflect limited later development in the vicinity of the town center (#205 and #118). Minimal architectural ornamentation, confined to cornices and center doorways, emphasizes the vernacular character of the district. Preservation is generally excellent; extensive modifications to two buildings have left intact the massing and scale of these individual houses, and the relationships amongst the buildings as a group (school #115 and #207).

Situated on the southeast corner of the district on the west side of Route 8 is The Old Town Pound, dating from 1768. Identified by a bronze marker, the rectangular structure is comprised of 6 foot high stone walls which enclose an area of approximately 40 square feet. At the northeast corner is an opening which indicates that a gate or barway was once there (plot 125, photos 1 and 2).

The Old Becket Center Post Office is situated north of the Old Town Pound on Route 8. The 2 story wood frame structure with a leanto addition originally constructed in 1857, was rebuilt in 1892 and was used as a post office from 1908-1927 (Plot 118, photo 3).

Located on a triangular piece of land across the street from the Old Town Hall and First Congregational Church is the Parade Ground or Old Town Common. This land parcel of slightly rolling terrain was set aside by the town in 1760 for the training of alarm list companies as well as for the grazing of animals. Its original bounds remain intact, and it stands as an excellent example of this early land use (Plot 188, photo 4). Across from the Parade Ground on the south side of Y.M.C.A. Road is the Old Town Hall. Constructed in 1890 to replace an earlier town hall, this three bay building of little ornamentation is a 1½ story late Greek Revival structure. The entry is on the gable end and is accented by an enclosed gable roofed porch. To the side of the building is a one story addition constructed in the mid-20th century to house a kitchen and restroom (Plot 205, photo 5).

West of the Parade Ground and north of the Old Town Hall on Y.M.C.A. Road stands the First Congregational Church built in 1850 to replace an earlier

(see continuation sheet)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Becket Center His. Dis. Item number 7 Page 1

one which had become structurally unsound. This church of Greek Revival design, exhibits many elements common to the style. The pedimented gable end faces the street with a classic entablature of cornice, frieze, and architrave. A simple row of dentils gives the latter two elements a clear definition. Pilasters at the corners frame the facade. The entry repeats the use of pilasters and a classic entablature and contains a set of double doors comprised of 6 panels on each frame (Plot 117, photo 6).

Next door to the church stands its former Horse Shed which was built in 1802. The post and beam frame structure, (enclosed by a wood shingle roof) measures 57½ feet by 19½ feet, contains seven stalls which are open ended on the east side (Plot 117, photos 7 & 8).

The site of the First Meeting House is located north of the First Congregational Church on Y.M.C.A. Road. A granite monument marks the site as well as a 40' x 50' level area containing foundation stones and steps to the Meeting House, (Plot 114).

The Becket Center Cemetery, situated to the west of the First Congregational Church, occupies 52 acres of land. It was the first burial ground in the township and was set aside by the proprietors in 1757 (Plot 116, photos 9 a,b, and c.) Many of Becket's earliest settlers are buried there, the earliest date being 1757. Several stones are shaped and carved in an elaborate folk tradition characterized by the use of floral motifs.

The Old Becket Center School House, District No. 1, sets close to the north side of Y.M.C.A. Road. It was built as a school house in 1814 and functioned as such until 1918. Since 1950, it has been a summer residence. The original 18' x 24' 1½ story core has been altered to suit residential needs by the addition of two ells and a porch and entry (Plot 115, photo 10).

Dr. Oliver Brewster House is a prominent structure at the western end of the district. It is a two story, five bay center chimney Georgian structure constructed in 1786. Spare in ornamentation, the building is articulated by projecting wooden cornice moldings over the first floor windows, a band of dentils along the upper cornice line, and a lunette on one of the gable ends (Plot 208, photos 12, 13, 14). The cellar hole of a small building, associated with the Dr. Brewster House and used as a store ca. 1820, is located on the northeast corner of Y.M.C.A. and Hamilton Roads. It measures 24'x 26' and is seven feet deep. A 9' x 26' portion of the building was cellarless (Plot 143, photo 15).

A 2½ acre Ice Pond, north of the Brewster House is held back by a dry laid stone dam 96'8" long and 8' wide with a spillway and overflow diversion. Today it feeds a small stream which flows under Hamilton Road and joins Walker Brook. An unidentified cellar hole, 21' x 35', exists north of the dam (Plot 134, Photo 16).

The McLaughlin House, built ca. 1790, is a 2½ story structure located in the northwest section of the district. Similar in appearance to the Brewster

(see continuation sheet)

EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet    Becket    Center H.D.    Item number    7    Page 2

House, this building of weathered shingles is typical of vernacular Georgian construction with its central chimney, five bay facade, and sloping gable roof. This building does not contain significant ornamental detail, but has a later front porch addition with a sloping roof (Plot 143, photo 17).

South of the intersection of Y.M.C.A. Road and Hamilton Road stands The Old Becket Center Parsonage, now "The Nest" of Camp Chimney Corners, a 1½ story Greek Revival style cape. Architectural details suggest a construction date of ca. 1830-1840. Molded trim with corner blocks outlines the recessed and side-lighted front door. Other notable features are corner pilasters, a wide cornice and pedimented gable ends. Two chimneys have been razed below the front gable roof slope. A 1½ story ell to the rear housed the kitchen, which has a cast iron fire frame of a style prevalent ca. 1831-1835 (Plot 133, photo 18).

The Snow-Bennett House was built around 1800 by S.C. Snow, a grandson of Asa Snow who came to Becket from Ashford, Connecticut in 1770. Originally this house was a simple clapboard, 1½ story Federal period Cape with a central chimney, five bay front and a center entry. It was extensively rebuilt in the 1920's - 1930's as a summer residence. The dormers, aluminum siding, picture window, and enclosed porch are all additions (Plot 207, photo 11).

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1756-1900 Builder/Architect N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Becket Center Historic District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. It is historically significant as the center of the original Township No. 4, later Becket, from 1756 through the mid 19th century. In 1841 the crossing of the Berkshire Hills was accomplished by the Western Railway which by-passed Becket Center. As a result of the subsequent commercial and population shift northward to the railhead at Becket Village, growth of the center virtually ceased. Becket Center continued, however, to function as the spiritual and political center of this agricultural community. Construction during the second half of the 19th century was limited to a few public buildings and ceased after 1900. The structures and historic archaeological sites preserved in the district represent its evolution from a focal point of early settlement in the mid 18th century to its later (after 1841) and current capacity as the civic and religious nucleus of the town. In this century, its rural setting has invited and been maintained by the establishment of two Y.M.C.A. camps.

Becket Center's significance lies, not so much in the visual merits of individual structures, as in the interrelationships amongst buildings and archaeological sites of a nucleated space and restricted time period. Interpreted as a whole, they are an unusually intact example of settlement and community life typical of a rural and agrarian upland Frontier locations during the late 18th to mid 19th century. Becket Center thus meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places. On the basis of surface evidence, there is a strong potential that criterion D is also met, although that cannot be justified without survey and subsurface testing of archaeological properties.

The town of Becket was originally the plantation "Number Four" granted by the Massachusetts General Court to a group of proprietors. The first meeting to discuss settlement and partition of lots was held in Marlborough, Massachusetts in 1737. However, lack of a good east-west road and disturbance on the Massachusetts frontier caused by the French and Indian War in the late 1750's delayed permanent settlement. Eventually, the natural advantages of the Becket Center site offering timber, land for grazing and agriculture, and water power for industry prevailed, and the town was incorporated June 21, 1765. Prior to gaining official town status, the needs of Becket's residents had already required construction of a gristmill (1753) and sawmill (ca. 1755), both 3 miles from Old Becket Center and outside of the district, purchase of a burying ground in 1756 (Plot 116, photos 9 a, b, & c), and construction of a Meeting House (1762-1764). Additionally, the Town Pound, (Plot 125, photos 1 & 2) located at the southeast end of the public land was built in 1768. A vote recorded August 29, 1768 directed that it be built 40 feet square with walls six feet high. Each member of the committee was to be given seasonal notice to work his proportion of time during the month of October. It is one of only two

(see continuation sheet)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References (see continuation sheet)

A Bicentennial History of Becket, Cathaline A. Archer & Mitchell Mulholland, Becket Historical Society, 1964.

"Becket's First Fifty Years, 1752-1802. Cathaline A. Archer, private printing.

"Becket's Sons in a Massachusetts Settlement of New Connecticut, Western Reserve, Windham, OH" Cathaline A. Archer, New Haven, Conn., October, 1953.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 40 acres

Quadrangle name Becket, MA

Quadrangle scale 1:25000

### UMT References

A 

1	9					
6	5	9	6	5	0	
4	6	8	3	0	2	0

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	9					
6	5	9	7	4	0	
4	6	8	2	6	6	0

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	9					
6	5	9	0	2	0	
4	6	8	2	6	6	0

D 

1	9					
6	5	8	6	3	0	
4	6	8	3	2	7	0

E 

1	9					
6	5	9	0	2	0	
4	6	8	3	2	4	0

F 

1	9					
6	5	9	1	1	0	
4	6	8	3	0	3	0

G 

1	9					
6	5	9	3	4	0	
4	6	8	3	1	4	0

H 


**Verbal boundary description and justification** The north boundary of the Historic District follows the north line of plots 114, 115, and 207, westerly from Route 8. The boundary then follows a stone wall, the east boundary of plot 143, north and westerly to another stone wall running approximately 248' W.S.W. to a corner on Hamilton Road. This is the north (see

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries** contin. sheet)

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Adams, Program Assistant, with James Parrish, Historic Preservation Planner, Berkshire County, Reg. Plan. Comm.

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May, 1982

street & number 294 Washington St. telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie Ann Talmage

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date June 28, 1982

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Delores Byers</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>8/11/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
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Continuation sheet      Becket Center H.D.      Item number      8      Page      1

intact pounds in Berkshire County. No buildings remain extant from this early period of settlement, although the site of this first Meeting House is known and other structures may be located with further research and sub-surface testing.

The various types and styles of exclusively wood-frame buildings included in the district attest to Becket Center's rural location and developmental history. The McLaughlin House, 1790 (Plot 143, photo 17), and the Dr. Oliver Brewster House (Plots 208 and 134, photos 12, 13, and 14), the earliest structures presently standing, are both large simple 2½ story late Georgian style farmhouses built at the end of the eighteenth century. Towards the mid-nineteenth century the Old Becket Center Parsonage, 1865 (Plot 133, photo 18 ), and the First Congregational Church, 1850 (Plot 117, photos 7 & 8), were erected in the popular Greek Revival style. The Church's solid clean-lined form serves as a focal point for the hamlet. The Old Town Hall, 1890 (Plot 205, photo 5), is an extremely plain building which continues the spirit of the Greek Revival style, and echoes the functional character of the remaining public and private structures in the district.

In 1812, Lt. David Brown presented Becket Center's second Meeting House with its first bell. It was purchased by George Conant, acting as agent for Lt. Brown, of Paul Revere & Son in Canton, MA. Conant served from 1805 to 1820 as representative to the General Court. Xenophan and Stephen Wadsworth, young men of the town, went to Boston with horses and returned with the bell. An item in George Conant's diary reads, Monday, October 19, 1812, "get ready to send home the bell, purchased for Lt. David Brown". On October 29, 1812, he notes, "The people assembled to hang the bell". Later, it was cracked and recast in Troy, N.Y. Augustus Perkins accompanied the bell and added 100 silver dollars to the molten metal, which was raised by subscription. It was believed to sweeten the tone. Becket's Revere Bell is believed to be the only bell in Berkshire County cast by the Revere foundry.

Becket Center School District No. 1 (Plot 115, photo 10) today a summer residence, was built in 1814, though various "Dame Schools" were held in the town between 1765 and 1774. In 1783, the townsmen organized eight school districts and ordered the selectmen to build a school house near the Meeting House as soon as may be possible. School assessments rose from 20 pounds, 19 shillings, 2 pence, to 25 pounds by 1790.

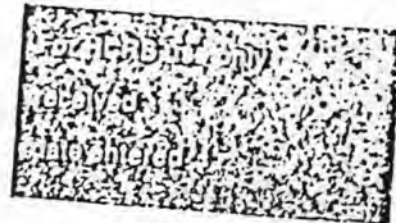
Town meetings were often held at the school near the Meeting House. From town records we learn that a town meeting was held April 14, 1814 in the new school house near the Meeting House. The Center School District No. 1 was closed in 1918 and its pupils transferred to the South Becket School.

Mrs. Cathaline Brewster Alford Archer, author of the three histories of Becket, summered in the Brewster House (Plots 208 and 134, photo 12, 13, and 14) during the early 1930's. She was a descendent of Dr. Oliver Brewster.  
(see continuation sheet)

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Becket Center H. D.

Item number 8



Page 2

Her husband, Dr. John Clark Archer, professor of Comparative Religion at Yale Divinity School, also wrote. He authored Faiths Men Live By.

Completion of the first Meeting House (Plot 113) in 1764 marked the beginning of Becket Center's 176 year tenure as the town's political center. Local militia companies met and trained at the Parade Ground (Plot 118, photo.4). from 1760 on. The present Old Town Hall building (Plot 205, Photo 5) served the community from 1891 to 1940 even though the majority of the population was located in or near Becket Center. Since 1950, as the First Congregational Church Sunday School and Parish Hall, it has continued its role as a local gathering place.

Becket Center has served the spiritual needs of local Congregationalist residents since the town's founding. The location of a Meeting House was first discussed in 1738 and again in 1756. A hiatus of two years passed. On October 11, 1758 the town proprietors agreed to fix the site of the Meeting House on a hill at the westernmost end of lot No. 22. It was further voted to build the Meeting House 45 x 35 feet. Again put off, the site was discussed on January 30, 1760, at the dwelling house of Mr. James Burchard. After a negative vote for a site on lot No. 25, the original site was again picked. It was directed that the township should build the Meeting House "as soon as conveniently possible and to procure land for public use; all that part of lot No. 22 that is south and east of the Burying Place so far as the road". Further, "to build the Meeting House at the most convenient place, in their judgement, or on the knoll on the north side of the road". The land was purchased from Mr. John Wadsworth, May 7, 1760, for \$5:10:0. Construction took place between 1761 and 1763. Money was voted for glass, floor, and door, October 27, 1762. The first meeting to be held in the Meeting House took place June 30, 1763. (Plot 113). The original Meeting House was replaced, May, 1800, by a new structure erected across the road.

The present edifice of the First Congregational Church of Becket (Plot 117, photos 7 & 8) was built in 1850 on the site of the Second Meeting House. The latter appears to have developed a structural problem with its added steeple and belfry, as Chester Wadsworth was hired to repair the bell yoke in 1845. Several meetings of the Congregational Society were held in April, 1849 about the condition of the steeple and church. The end result was the forming of a Joint Stock Meeting House Company to construct a new church. It was dedicated June 19, 1850.

The church Horse Sheds (Plot 117, photos 7 and 8) were the subject of Article 10, of a town meeting held March 15, 1802. A committee was chosen to forward a plan to build horse sheds on the public land in the town center. The meeting was adjourned until April 5, 1802, when the plans were accepted. When the church was replaced in 1850, the horse sheds were retained. Between 1913 and 1921, several bills appear in the Town Register for repairs. The largest, \$278.87 was allocated in 1920. In 1930, another

(see continuation sheet)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
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Continuation sheet Becket Center H.D.

Item number

8

Page

3

set of sheds on the south side were razed. In 1977 at the annual church meeting in January, the church voted to restore their horse sheds, 45 years after the last work was done. Becket is the only community in Berkshire County to preserve its horse sheds with its church.

The Old Becket Parsonage (Plot 133, photo 18), circa 1835, was sold to the First Congregational Society of Becket, April 1, 1868, by George and Ida Jones. Six hundred dollars was the price paid for the house and small barn, originally owned by Samuel Ingham and operated as a farm. It was first occupied by the Rev. John Hartwell. In May, 1874, H.W. Eldrege, a student in the Hartford Seminary, was called to pastor both Congregational Churches in the town and use of the Parsonage was discontinued. From 1881 to 1888, a number of references are made to repairs and management of the Parsonage in the Church Records. It was rented, the management left to the trustees, again used as a parsonage in 1897 and sold in 1908. Until 1927, it was used as a home. After that, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Smith developed it as a headquarters for Camp Chimney Corners. It was purchased by the Y.M.C.A. in 1972.

Dr. Oliver Brewster, who built the house at the west end of Y.M.C.A. Road (Plots 208 and 134, photos 12, 13, and 14) was an eighth generation descendent of William Brewster, elder of the Separatist Church of Leyden Holland and Plymouth, Massachusetts. Oliver was born April 2, 1760 at Lebanon, Connecticut. He served as a military surgeon under Col. John Brown of Pittsfield at the Battle of Stone Arabia, New York in 1780. He was appointed surgeon July 23, 1780 and discharged November 2, 1780, after serving 2 months, 29 days of a 3 month enlistment. He married Jerusha Badger of Partridgefield (Hinsdale-Peru) May 27, 1781. It is believed he came to Becket in 1785 and served as the Town's first physician and later a deacon of the church. The inscription on his gravestone in Becket Center Cemetery reads: "Sacred to the memory of Doctor Oliver Brewster, F.M.M.S. who died February 15, 1812... He had been in practice in the town 33 years and by his faithful preserving industry attained to eminence in his profession. He was a pattern of conjugal and paternal affection, hospitable to strangers, kind to the poor, and in some good measure, devoted to the interest of religion."

His son, Dr. John Milton Brewster, was born in the Homestead October 22, 1789. He was educated at Lenox Academy and graduated from Boston Medical School in 1812. He studied medicine with his father and took over that practice until 1821 when he moved to Lenox, Massachusetts. The house was sold a year later. In 1837 he moved to Pittsfield where he practiced medicine for 55 years and died May 3, 1869, an abolitionist and active member of the First Congregational Church of Pittsfield.

The Brewster property exchanged hands eleven times between 1822 and 1973 when it was purchased by the executive committee of the Y.M.C.A.'s of Massachusetts and Rhode Island in 1973. They are considering the long-term restoration of the house as a residence and Historical Interpretive Center for Camps Becket and Chimney Corners under their Outdoor Education Program.

The partial reversion of Becket Center to woodland has provided an ideal setting for the

(see continuation sheet)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Becket Center H.D. Item number 8 Page 4

development of Camps Becket and later Chimney Corners. Both are now under direction of the Y.M.C.A.'s of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Camp Becket, seventy-eight years old, was founded in 1903, one of the oldest in the country. It pioneered modern camping methods under its first director, Henry W. Gibson, who served from 1904 to 1927. A president of the National Camp Directors Association, he authored several books, such as Camp Management and Boyology. Among its many notable alumni, Dr. Paul D. White of Boston served as camper, counselor, assistant Camp Doctor, and later in life, chairman of the Y.M.C.A.'s executive committee.

Becket Center developed along the major Boston and Albany Road, long discontinued as a whole, although sections are still in use. The Messenger Tavern, later a stage-stop, was operated near the Town Common from the 1760's through the Federal Period. A Capt. Peter Porter was tavern keeper from 1765 through the Revolution. The exact location of the tavern is presently unknown, however, subsurface remains of outbuildings and trash deposits may exist in the vicinity of the present Post Office (#118).

Household and agricultural supplies were available to local residents at Williams Store in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is mentioned in an 1820 deed concerning the the Brewster House and was sold with the latter from 1826 on. The remains of its cellar hole are likely to contain artifactual deposits relating to its' past commercial function (Plot 208, photo 15).

Small scale industries operating in Becket Center in the early nineteenth century included a tan yard which diverted water from the pond north of the Brewster House. The use of the ice pond was reserved by deed in 1839. A dam and cellar hole at the south end of the pond are perhaps associated with the tan yard, or an as yet unidentified industry (Plot 134, photo 16).

From its initial settlement in the 1760's through the mid-nineteenth century Becket Center developed quickly. Since that time, little has occurred to alter the historical fabric of the village. This sequence of sharp growth and decline has produced a "time capsule" with significant application to historic settlement systems' research. The village's history is typical of upland frontier towns where the establishment of residential, commercial, industrial, religious and civic properties occurred swiftly in nucleated, yet isolated locations. This isolation, at first a spur to local and surrounding community growth, in the 18th century, was translated to a decline factor with the advent of improved transportation (e.g. railroads and turnpike) during the 19th century. Towns not fortunate to be along these communication links found themselves at a distinct disadvantage, and in general, suffered the inevitable consequences. While some town centers were able to recover to varying degrees, and experienced change in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, others such as Becket Center did not. Becket Center is particularly notable for the fact that although some structures have been altered through time, there were no buildings constructed later than 1900. Becket Center's history therefore exhibits a strong possibility for the continued presence of rich, varied, and undisturbed historic archaeological resources complementing the standing structure stock. In addition to the several properties already mentioned above, other

(see continuation sheet)

EXP. 12/31/84

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Becket Center H. D.

Item number

8

Page 5

intact, but less surficially visible subsurface features and artifactual deposits are expected to exist: buried foundations, privies, wells and discrete and scattered trash deposits relating to domestic, agricultural, industrial and commercial activities. These features are an important part of the cultural landscape. The association of these physical remains with the multiplicity of activities known to have constituted the lives of Becket's immediate and peripheral residents can provide an important research tool. Through the integration of archaeological investigations, material culture studies (e.g. architecture) and documentary research focused on a temporally and spatially contained unit which Becket Center exemplifies, directed research can contribute significantly to our understanding of rural 18th and 19th century settlement patterns and lifeways.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Becket Center H.D. Item number 9, 10 Page 1

Continuation of #9.

Massachusetts Soldiers & Sailors in the War of the Revolution, Vol 2, Commonwealth  
of Massachusetts, 1924.

Continuation of #10.

bound of plot 143. The district then crosses Hamilton Road diagonally to another corner with a stone wall running 285° W.N.W. to the north corner of the Brewster Ice Pond. Then, following an old stone wall 180° south on the west shore of said Ice Pond to the north-west corner plot 208 on Hamilton Road. Then following the west line of plot 208 it crosses Bennett Road, behind the Old Parsonage and barn to a stone wall. Then 80° east across Hamilton Road following a stone wall to the Southwest corner of plot 118 and following the south line.

BECKET CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT, BECKET, MASS.  
PROPERTY LIST

<u>PHOTO</u>	<u>PLOT</u>	<u>PROPERTY</u>	<u>OWNER</u>
1 & 2	125	Town Pound	Town of Becket
---	122	Engwer Land	Mr. & Mrs. William A. Engwer Becket Center
3	118	Old Post Office	Helen Flynn Becket Center
4	188	"The Parade" Old Town Common	Town of Becket
5	205	Old Becket Town Hall	First Congregation Church Society Becket Center
6,7,8	117	First Congregation Church and Horse Sheds	First Congregation Church Society Becket Center
9a,b,c	116	Becket Center Cemetery	Town of Becket
---	119	Y.M.C.A. Land	Executive Committee of Y.M.C.A. Mass. & R. I. 14 Sommerset, St., Boston
---	114	"So Called Town Land", Site of First Meeting House	Town of Becket
---	113	"First Minister's Lot"	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Furlong Becket Center
10	115	Old Becket Center School District No. 1	Mr. William B. Blaurock Becket Center
11	207	Snow - Bennett House	Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Demarest Becket Center
12,13,14	208 & 134	Dr. Oliver Brewster House	Executive Committee of Y.M.C.A. 14 Somerset St., Boston
15	143	Cellar Hole of Store	Executive Committee of Y.M.C.A. 14 Somerset St., Boston
16	134	Ice Pond	Executive Committee of Y.M.C.A. 14 Somerset St., Boston
17	143	McLaughlin House	Eleanor McLaughlin 404 Fourth St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

PHOTO

PLOT

PROPERTY

OWNER

18

133

Old Becket Center Parsonage

Executive Committee of  
Y.M.C.A.  
14 Somerset St., Boston



BECKET CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 BECKET, BERKSHIRE CO., MA  
 SCALE: 1" = 400' (approximately)  
 DATE: 1982

- - STONE WALL
- - DISTRICT BOUNDARY

SOURCE: COMPOSITE FROM ASSESSORS MAP (1965), USGS (1973), AIR PHOTOS (1975)

82004952

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Becket Center Historic District, Berkshire County,  
MASSACHUSETTS,

Working No. 7/6/82-1936  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83  
Date Due: 8/4/82 - 8/20/82  
Action:  ACCEPT 8/11/82  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ resubmission  
\_\_\_ nomination by person or local government  
\_\_\_ owner objection  
\_\_\_ appeal

Entered in the  
National Register

Substantive Review: \_\_\_ sample \_\_\_ request \_\_\_ appeal \_\_\_ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category      Ownership      Status      Present Use  
                 Public Acquisition      Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

7. Description

Condition      Check one      Check one  
\_\_\_ excellent      \_\_\_ deteriorated      \_\_\_ unaltered      \_\_\_ original site  
\_\_\_ good      \_\_\_ ruins      \_\_\_ altered      \_\_\_ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ fair      \_\_\_ unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- \_\_\_ summary paragraph
- \_\_\_ completeness
- \_\_\_ clarity
- \_\_\_ alterations/integrity
- \_\_\_ dates
- \_\_\_ boundary selection

---

## **8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

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

---

## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

---

## **10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **11. Form Prepared By**

---

## **12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **13. Other**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



BECKET  
TOWN POUND  
1768

I.

"BRONZE MARKER, Becket Town. Pound. 1768. Route 8

Becket Center.

James N. Parrish

5/8/80.

(MAP 125)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Becket Town Pound, Bronze Marker.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 1 of 18



II.

VIEW west, BECKET TOWN POUND. 1768. SOUTH BOUNDARY. Hist. Dist.

Becket Center. ROUTE 8

James N. Parrish.

5/8/80.

(125)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

View west, Becket Town Pound.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 2 of 18



III.

View West, Old Becket Center, Post Office. c 1840 site of Messenger  
Tavern c 1765. BECKET CENTER ROUTE 8, 1/11/80  
JAMES N. PARRISH. (118)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

View west, Old Becket Center Post Office,  
circa 1840.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



IV

BECKET, PARADE OR TRAINING GROUND. (COMMON.) VIEW - NORTH  
from . Route 8 + Y.M.C.A. ROAD. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (188)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Becket Parade or Training Ground. View north  
from Route 8 and Y.M.C.A. Road.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 4 of 18



V.

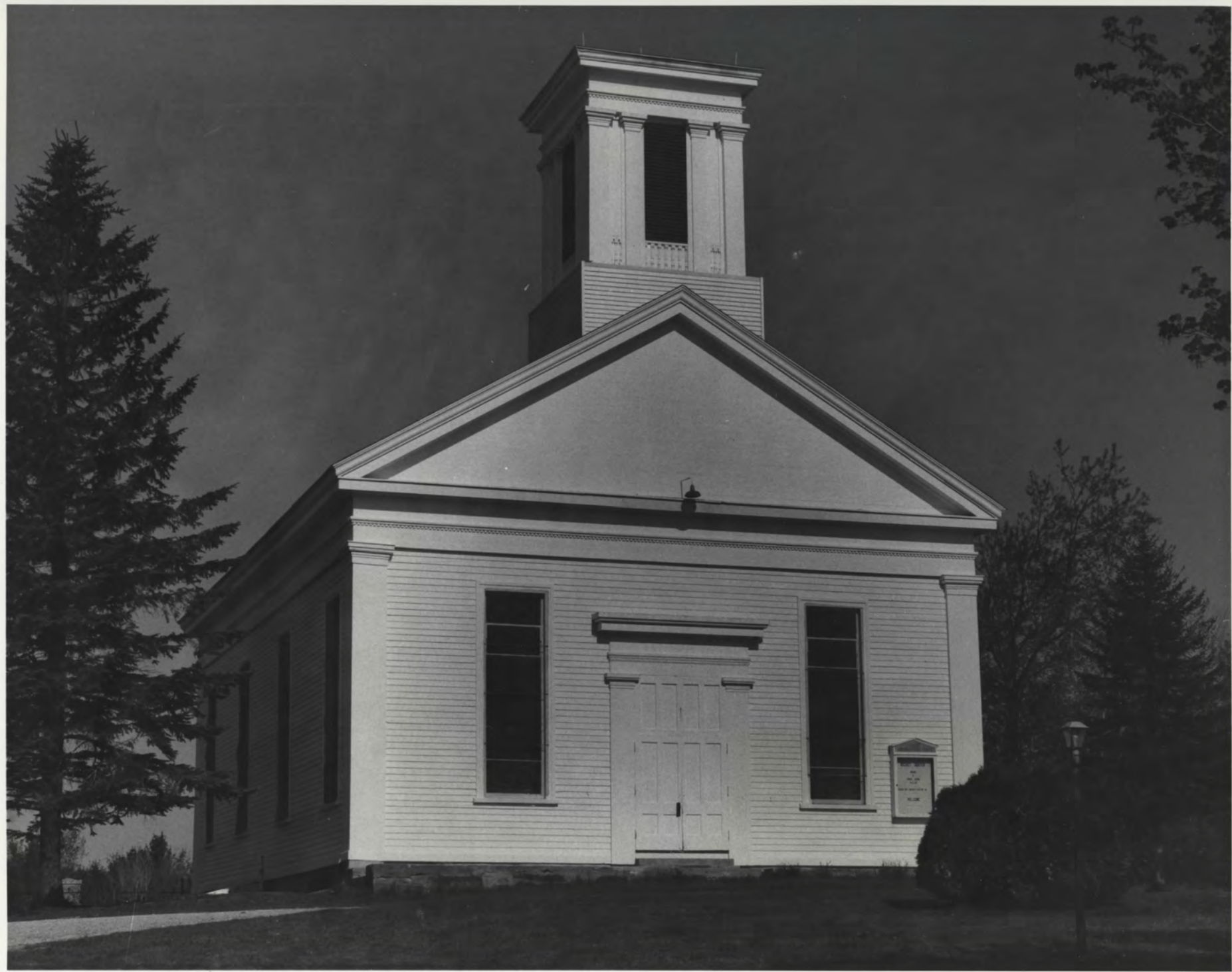
Old Becket Town Hall c1840. view south west. from Common.  
off Y.M.C.A. Road. Becket Center. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (205)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Old Becket Center Town Hall, circa 1840.  
View southwest from Parade.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 5 of 18

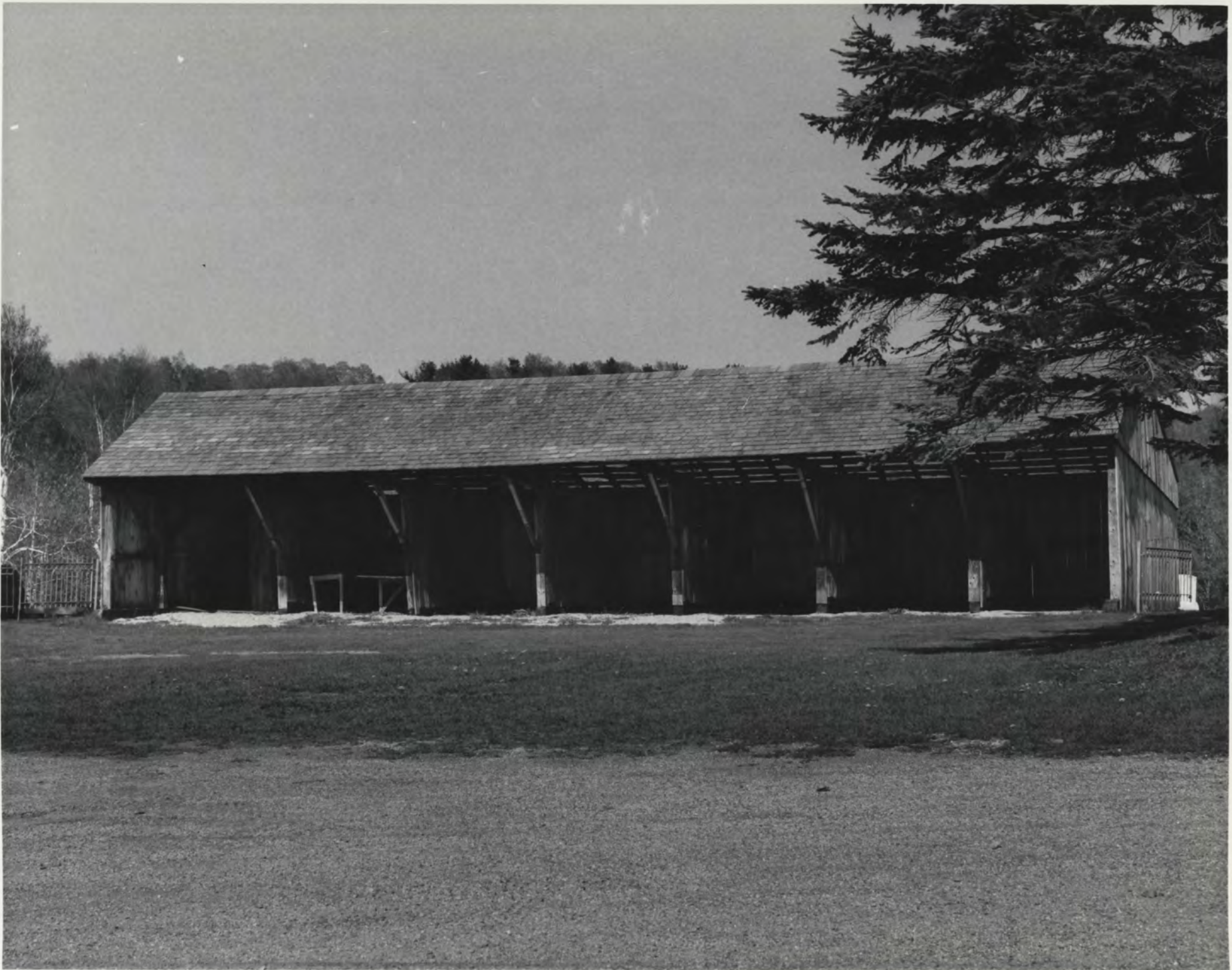


First CONGREGATIONAL Church. of Becket. Built 1850. View West  
from Common. Y.M.C.A. ROAD BECKET CENTER. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (117)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

First Congregational Church of Becket, built  
1849. View west from Parade.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



VII.

: BECKET Church. HORSE SHEDS. c 1802 view west from  
COMMON. Y.M.C.A. ROAD. BECKET CENTER. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish RE-roofing with CEDAR SHINGLES in PROGRESS in RUMBLE.

(117)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Horse Sheds, circa 1802. View west from  
Parade.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 7 of 18



VIII.

HORSE SHEDS. C. 1802. REAR VIEW. S. DURING RESHINGLING.  
BUCKET CENTER. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (117)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Horse Sheds, circa 1802. Rear view, looking  
south during reshingling.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negatives on file with photographer

Photo# 8 of 18

In Memory of Mr.  
Ebenezer ADAMS, who  
died Sep. 28th 1775  
in the 60th year of his age  
Likewise Mrs. Elizabeth  
his wife died Nov. 5th 1792  
in the 84th year of her age.



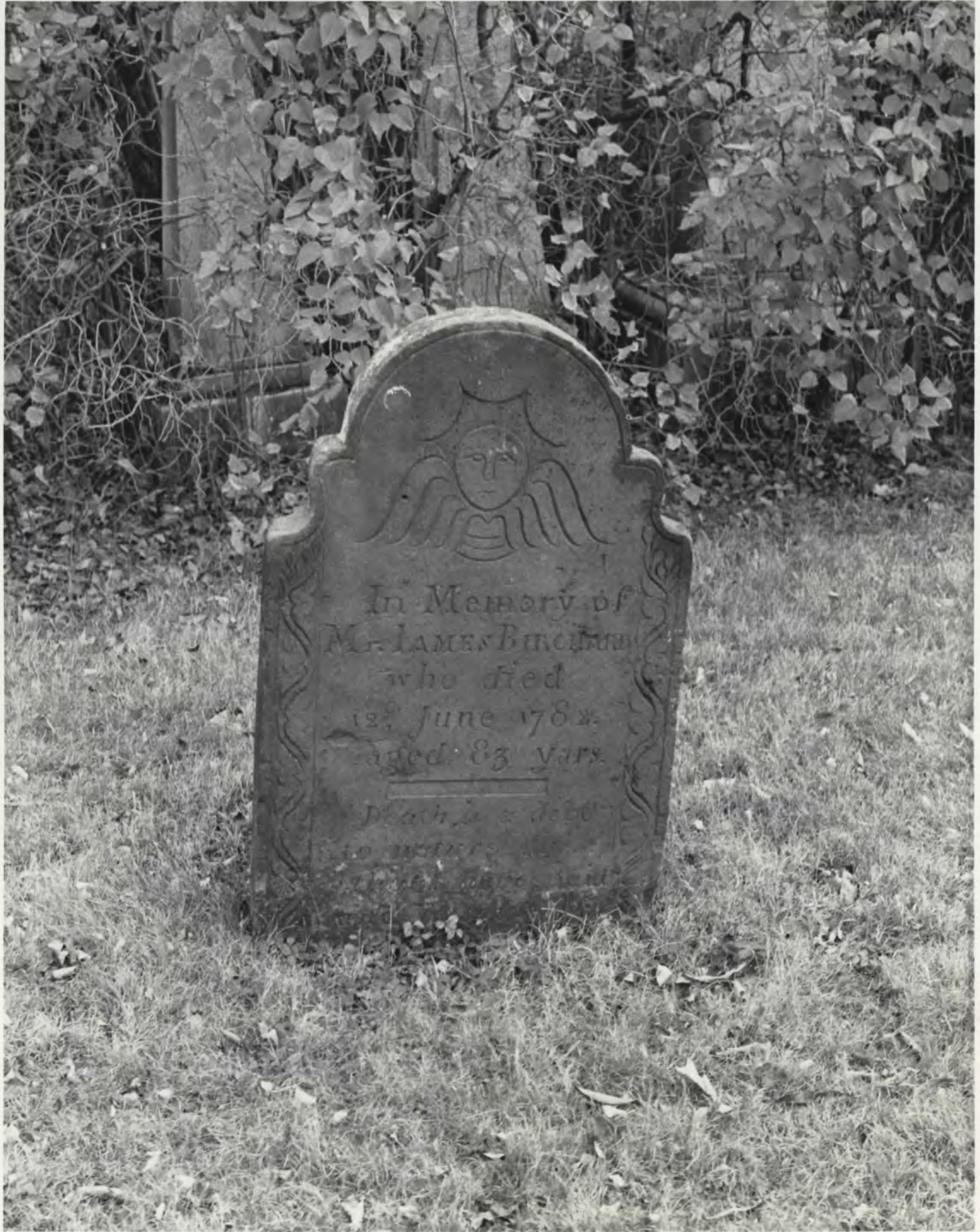
IX A.

FOLK ART TOMBSTONES, BECKET CENTER CEMETERY  
EBENEZER + ELIZABETH. ADAMS. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (116)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Becket Center Cemetery. Tombstone of  
Ebenezer and Elizabeth Adams.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



In Memory of  
Mr. JAMES BIRCHUM  
who died  
12th June 1784  
aged 83 yrs.

Death & date  
to which the  
body was buried  
the 12th June 1784

II 3.

Folk Art. Tombstones, Becket Center Cemetery.

Mr. James Brichard.

5/8/80

James N. Parrish.

(116)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Tombstone of Mr. James Brichard, 1782.  
Becket Center Cemetery.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer.

Photo# 9b of 18

ED  
OF  
THOMAS  
1824  
1910



In Memory of Mr.  
Benoni Messenger  
who Departed this life  
Jan 15 1871 at the age of 47

D.C.

FOKK ART Tomb STONES, BECKET CENTER CEMETERY.

BENONI MESSENGER, 5/8/80.

JAMES N. PARRISH.

(114)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Becket Center Cemetery. Tombstone of Benoni  
Messenger.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 9c of 18



X.

OLD BUCKET CENTER School House. District No 2 c. 1814.

YMCA. ROAD. 1/11/80 view - north west.

James N. Parrish.

(115)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Old Becket Center School House, District No. 2,  
circa 1814. View from Y.M.C.A. Road looking  
northwest.

James N. Parrish 1/11/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 10 of 18



VI.

SNOW-BENNETT HOUSE. C. 1800, Y.M.C.A. ROAD.

BECKET CENTER. 1/11/80.

JAMES N. PARRISH

(207)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Snow-Bennett House, circa 1800. Y.M.C.A. Road.

James N. Parrish 1/11/80  
Negative on file with photographer



Dr. Oliver Brewster House 1786, view North West.  
from corner of Hamilton Rd + Y.M.C.A. Road, BECKET CENTER  
5/8/80 JAMES N. PARRISH.

(205,134)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Dr. Oliver Brewster House, 1786. View northwest  
from corner of Hamilton and Y.M.C.A. Roads.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



XIII.

Dr. Oliver Brewster House. 1786. View Southwest from  
Hamilton Road. + Y.M.C.A. Road, showing north gable.  
Fanlight. + Front. 5/8/80 JAMES N. PARRISH.

(208.134)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Dr. Oliver Brewster House, 1786. View  
southwest from Hamilton Road, showing north  
gable, fanlight and front.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 13 of 18



TKU.

Dr. Oliver Brewster House. 1786. Rear facade, to  
North east. 5/8/80  
James N. Parrish. (208.134)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Dr. Oliver Brewster House, 1786. Rear facade  
to northeast.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo# 14 of 18



XV.

Site of William's Store. View of Foundation, Cellarhole, to  
Northeast opposite, Brewster House. 5/8/80

James N. Parrish.

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Site of William's Store. View of foundation,  
cellarhole, to northeast opposite Brewster  
House.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo # 15 of 18



XVI.

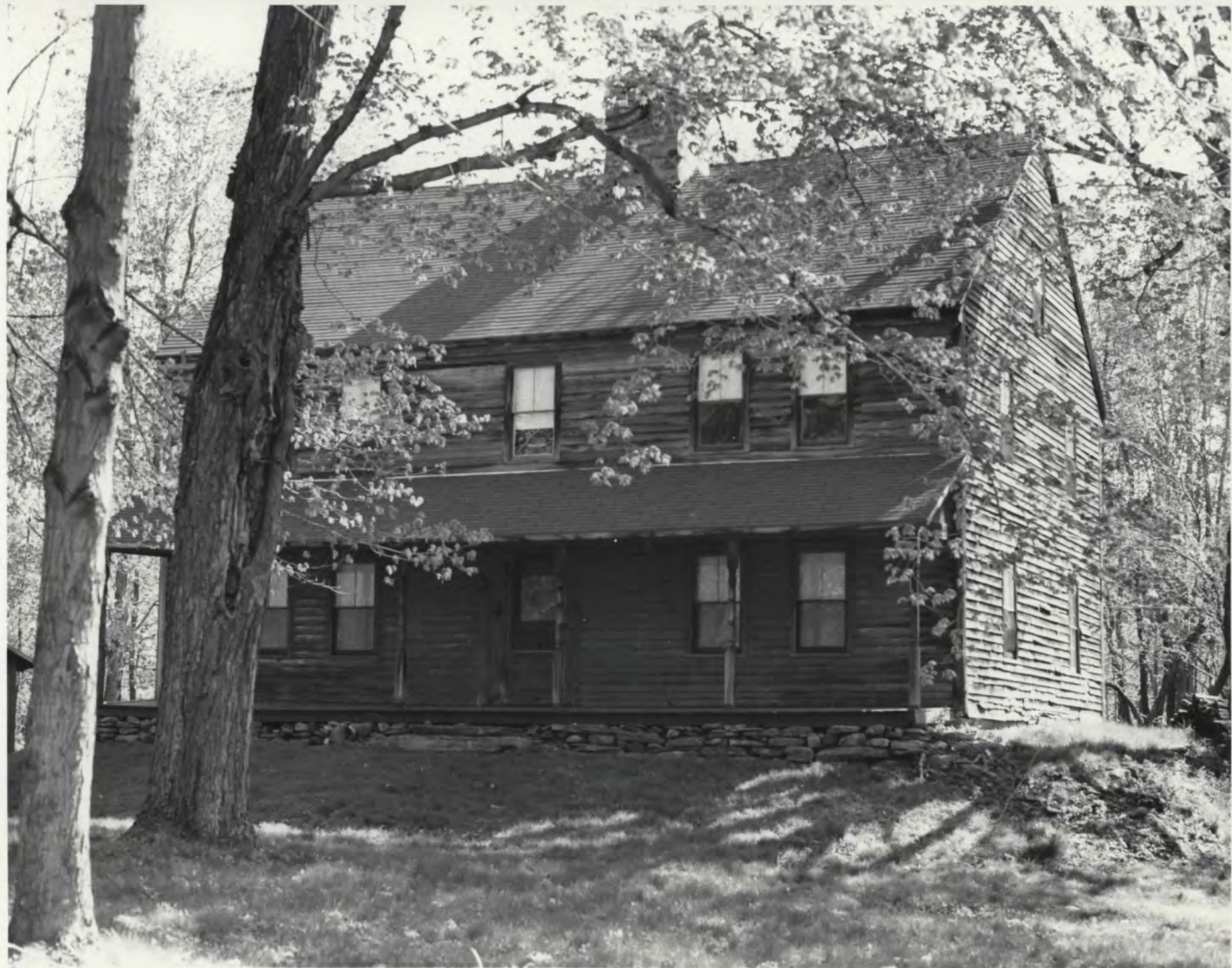
Brewster Ice Pond, Dam + Spillway. VIEW - West - North  
West from. Hamilton Road. 5/8/1980.

James N. Parrish.

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Brewster Ice Pond, dam, and spillway. View  
west-northwest from Hamilton Road.

James N. Parrish            5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



XVII.

: McLaughlin House. c 1790. Twin of Brewster House.  
VIEW. North east from. Hamilton Road. BECKET CENTER.  
5/8/80. JAMES N. PARRISH.

(143)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

McLaughlin House, circa 1790. Twin of Brewster  
House. View northeast from Hamilton Road

James N. Parrish      5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer

Photo # 17 of 18



XVIII .

: Old BECKET CENTER PARSONAGE. (SAMUEL INGHAM FARM. c 1835)  
View. NORTH WEST. from. HAMILTON ROAD. Becket Center.  
JAMES N. PARRISH. 5/8/80

(133)

Becket Center Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co., MA

Old Becket Center Parsonage (Samuel Ingham  
Farm), circa 1835. View northwest from  
Hamilton Road.

James N. Parrish 5/8/80  
Negative on file with photographer



Becket Center  
Historic District  
Becket, Berkshire Co.,  
Massachusetts

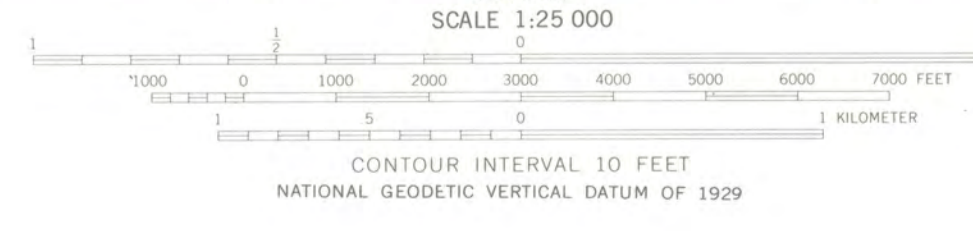
UMT References

A 19/659650/4683020  
B 19/659740/4682660  
C 19/659020/4682660  
D 19/658630/4683270  
E 19/659020/4683240  
F 19/659110/4683030  
G 19/659340/4683140



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1941. Topography by planimetric surveys 1945. Revised from  
aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1973

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,  
zone 18



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———

Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BECKET, MASS.  
N4215-W7300/7.5  
1973  
AMS 6368 1 SE-SERIES B714

Becket Center  
notarized objection

ELEANOR M. McLOUGHLIN  
404 Fourth Street, Brooklyn, New York 11215

RECEIVED

Ms. Patricia L. Weslowski

MAY - 7 1982

State Preservation Officer

Massachusetts Historical Commission

MASS. HIST. COMM.

Boston, Mass. 02108

To whom it may concern:

I, Eleanor McLoughlin, hereby certify  
that I am the sole owner of property on  
YMCA Road in Becket, Mass, consisting  
of a house with shell and detached garage  
and fourteen acres of land, more or less,  
listed in the Becket town tax records as  
YMCA Road, lot 143. McLoughlin House

I do not wish this property to  
be listed in the National or State Register  
of Historic Places and I hereby state  
my objection to such listing.

Eleanor M. Loughlin

June 4, 1982

EVELYN HEIMOWITZ  
NOTARY PUBLIC, State of New York  
No. 24-4525891  
Qualified in Kings County  
Commission Expires March 30, 1984

Evelyn Heimowitz



MASSACHUSETTS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
Office of the Secretary of State

294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts  
02108  
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY  
Secretary of State

June 15, 1982

Eleanor M. McLaughlin  
404 Fourth St.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215

Dear Ms. McLaughlin:

On June 9, 1982, the Massachusetts State Review Board considered the National Register eligibility of the Becket Center Historic District. They voted that the district met criteria A and C of the National Register of the Historic Places. In accordance with Federal regulations (36CFR60) that nomination will now be forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, along with all owner comments received to date. Because you were the only owner who objected, that district can be listed in the National Register if the Keeper concurs in the State Review Board decision.

Sincerely,

*Candace Jenkins*  
(SAC)

Candace Jenkins  
Registration Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CJ/sac



**MASSACHUSETTS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

6/28/82

Ms. Carol Shull, Acting Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

- ✓ Becket: Becket Center Historic District (local)
- Billerica: Manning Manse (local)
- Lowell: Allen House (local)
- Lowell: South Common Historic District (local)
- Lowell: Washington Square Historic District (local)
- Lowell: Wamesit Canal and Whipple Mill Complex (local)
- Northampton: Dimock Estate (local)
- Westfield: Landlord Fowler Tavern (local - DOE: 11/79)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 - 75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

*Candace Jenkins*

Candace Jenkins  
Registration Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CJ/sac

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts  
02108  
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY  
Secretary of State

