

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC ROBERT FROST HOMESTEAD

AND/OR COMMON Robert Frost Homestead

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Rockingham Road  
(New Hampshire Route 28), 2 miles southeast of Derry Village  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Derry  VICINITY OF First CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE New Hampshire CODE 033 COUNTY Rockingham CODE 015

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME State of New Hampshire, Division of Parks

STREET & NUMBER State House Annex

CITY, TOWN Concord STATE New Hampshire  
VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER Rockingham County Court House

CITY, TOWN Exeter STATE New Hampshire

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Sites Associated with Robert Frost, New Hampshire and Vermont

DATE 1968  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Robert Frost Homestead is located on the east side of Rockingham Road (New Hampshire Route 28, formerly known as the Londonderry Turnpike) some 2 miles southeast of Derry Village, New Hampshire. The 13-acre property is sheltered on the north and south by lines of low hills; a small brook flows west along the southern edge of the property. The original farm buildings--the house with attached woodshed and barn--stand near Rockingham Road facing west and are relatively unaltered in character. The poultry houses which Frost built at the rear of the barn shortly after moving to the farm are no longer extant.

The Frost farmhouse consists of a 1 1/2-story main section and a 1-story rear wing, both frame and clapboard with gabled roof. The exact age of the house is unknown but it is thought to date from the 1870's. The main entrance, located at the left (north) side of the front elevation, is covered by a simple hood supported on carved brackets. To the right is a bay window, now partially obscured by shrubbery. Simple pilasters mark the corners of this elevation. A 1-story open porch runs along the southern side of the main section of the house. Windows throughout the house are 2/2 double-hung sash and are irregularly spaced.

Interior detailing of the farmhouse is limited to simple door and window moldings. The first floor contains a parlor, dining room, and small bedroom in the main section of the house and the kitchen and pantry in the wing; on the second floor are three bedrooms in the main section and an attic in the wing. A small 1-story woodshed (which also contains a privy) connects the wing with the gable-roofed wooden barn.

A substantial amount of work has been done on the Frost Homestead buildings since they were acquired by the State of New Hampshire in 1965. The buildings have been repainted on the outside and necessary structural repairs have been made on the interior of the barn. Work on the house has included removal of a dormer (not original), re-shingling the roof, installation of new plaster ceilings, and replacement of unsound flooring on the first story. Modern fixtures and plumbing in the kitchen were removed as was the bathroom which had been created at the rear of the stairhall on the first floor. Robert Frost's daughter, Leslie Frost Ballentine, is currently assisting the New Hampshire Division of Parks in the selection of wallpaper and furnishings similar to those used in the house during the poet's residence there.

While the Homestead buildings retain their original character, the farm itself has been substantially altered. When Frost occupied the property, there were hayfields to the east and south of the buildings, a large orchard to the northeast, and a garden immediately to the north. Edward Lee, the last private owner of the farm, removed the orchard, sold off the top soil, leveled the ground in the immediate area of the farm buildings, and constructed a concrete block garage at the rear (east) of the barn to accommodate his used car parts business. Though the garage has now been removed, the ground to the east and south of the Homestead is still littered with fragments of metal and glass. As funds become available, the Division of Parks plans to restore the original contours and soil quality of the farm. In addition some 63 acres of adjoining land will be developed as the site of a visitor center and recreation area.

# 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"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES                      1900-1909                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT                      not known

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The author of 11 volumes of poetry, Robert Frost has been one of the few 20th-century poets to command both critical respect and wide readership. During his lifetime he reaped more honors than any other American poet before him. On four occasions he received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry: in 1924 for New Hampshire, in 1931 for Collected Poems, in 1937 for A Further Range, and in 1943 for A Witness Tree. The current assessment of Robert Frost is that he will stand as one of our greatest American poets.

Between 1900 and 1909 Robert Frost lived on a 13-acre farm two miles southeast of Derry, New Hampshire. It was there that Frost developed his style and strength as a poet and composed many of the poems found in his first two books, A Boy's Will (1913) and North of Boston (1914). Though the land has been substantially altered by a subsequent owner, the 1 1/2-story frame house and attached barn are relatively unchanged. The New Hampshire Division of Parks acquired the Frost Homestead in 1965 and has undertaken a full-scale restoration of the property.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, California. He was the son of William Prescott Frost, Jr., a newspaper reporter from Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Isabelle Moodie Frost, a former teacher who was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Frost was 11 years old when his father died of tuberculosis. Honoring a last request, the family took the body back to Lawrence for burial. No funds were available for the return trip and Mrs. Frost settled with her children--Robert and his younger sister Jeanie--in Salem, New Hampshire, where she earned a living for several years by teaching school.

Frost entered Dartmouth College in the fall of 1892 but disliked formal study so intensely that he left after only two months. During the next two years, he earned a living in miscellaneous ways while sending poems to uninterested editors. In 1894, to celebrate his first sale of a poem--"My Butterfly: An Elegy", published by the New York Independent--he privately printed six of his poems in a booklet entitled Twilight, an edition limited to two copies, one for his affianced, Elinor White, and one for himself.

After his marriage in 1895, Frost taught for two years at his mother's private school in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and then spent the next two years as a special student at Harvard. In October, 1900, for reasons of health, Frost moved to the small farm at Derry, New Hampshire, which his grandfather, William Prescott Frost,

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 13 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	31,27,0,0	4,74,906,0	B	1,9	31,27,6,0	4,74,88,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,9	31,25,3,0	4,74,87,4,0	D	1,9	31,24,2,0	4,74,89,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries for the national historic landmark designation for the Robert Frost Homestead in Derry, New Hampshire, are those of the 13-acre parcel located on the east side of New Hampshire Route 28 as acquired by the New Hampshire Division of Parks from Edward Lee in June, 1965. Specific lines are shown in red on the accompanying survey map prepared for the Division of Parks.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project, original form prepared by John D. McDermott, Historian 3/68

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE 1/6/76

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street, N.W. TELEPHONE 202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington, D.C. STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>1/26/79</u>
ATTEST: <u>Bill Labovich</u>	DATE <u>1/25/79</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Frost Homestead ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

had purchased for him. Known locally as the "Magoon place", the farm consisted of some 13 acres of land with a 1 1/2-story frame house and attached wooden shed and barn. In 1901 the elder Frost died, leaving a will which provided that Robert could assume title to the Derry farm if he maintained it for ten years.

One of the first improvements Frost made at the farm was the construction of two large poultry houses at the rear (east) of the barn. In the beginning, Frost was serious about farming and worked hard to make a success of the venture. At the same time, he began writing poetry in earnest. By 1906 he had lost his enthusiasm for farming and took a temporary position teaching English literature to sophomores at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, where he later obtained permanent employment. In 1909 Frost left the farm and moved to a house on Thornton Street in Derry. By this time he had developed his powers as a poet and gained the self-confidence he had been seeking.

In November, 1911, Frost moved to Plymouth, where he accepted a teaching position at the New Hampshire Normal School. Though he sold the Derry Farm at that time, Frost always remembered it as the place where he had been reborn; it was there that he became acquainted with the land, there that he became a poet. Frost once remarked that "the core of all my writing was probably the free years that I had there". Many of the poems that were collected in his first two books were written or rewritten at the Derry farm, including "Death of a Hired Man", "Trial by Existence", and "The Mending Wall".

By 1912 Frost had decided to devote his main efforts to poetry and, fortified with the money obtained from the sale of the Derry farm and an annuity of \$800 left him by his grandfather, Frost set sail for England with his family. Settling first in Buckinghamshire and then in Herefordshire, he cultivated the friendship of a number of English poets. Composing a few new poems and selecting others written at Derry and elsewhere, Frost prepared a volume for publication. Mrs. Alfred Nutt of London brought out the first book, A Boy's Will, in 1913. A second, North of Boston, appeared the following year. The cordial praise given those poems by British men of letters won him lasting friendships in England and attracted the surprised attention of critics and editors in his native land. When he returned to the United States in 1915, his first two books had been reissued in New York, and North of Boston soon became a best seller. A third volume, Mountain Interval, was published in 1916.

After his return from England, Frost purchased a farm two miles west of Franconia in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In 1917 he accepted a position as Professor of English at Amherst College. During the rest of his life, Frost spent a part of almost every year teaching and working in a college atmosphere. As his reputation grew, the demands made upon him as a

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CONTINUATION SHEET Frost Homestead ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

teacher decreased, and he held a number of Fellowships at various colleges, all of which gave him a great deal of freedom to pursue his art. His major appointments were at Amherst (1917-1920, 1923-1925, 1926-1938, 1949-1963), the University of Michigan (1921-1923, 1925-1926), Harvard (1939-1942), and Dartmouth (1943-1949).

Throughout his life, Frost continued to return to the New England countryside when the weather was good and his schedule permitted. In 1920 he bought the Peleg Cole Farm in South Shaftsbury, Vermont. In December of 1923 he purchased a second farm in the area, "The Gully", which he kept until after the death of his wife 10 years later. In 1940 Frost purchased the 150-acre Homer Noble Farm near Ripton, Vermont. From that time until his death in 1963, Frost spent the summer and fall months of each year at Ripton; springs were spent at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and winters at the New England type bungalow that he built on rural land near Coral Gables, Florida.

Robert Frost reaped more honors during his lifetime than any other American poet before him. On four occasions he received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry: in 1924 for New Hampshire, in 1931 for Collected Poems, in 1937 for A Further Range, and in 1943 for A Witness Tree. In 1939 he became the third poet in history to receive the coveted gold medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1958 he was appointed Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. Frost became such a national institution that he was asked to read a poem at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy on January 20, 1961. Perhaps the most eloquent tribute paid to him after his death was made by a fellow poet, John Ciardi, who said simply: "He was our best."

The State of New Hampshire acquired the Frost Homestead from its last private owner, Edward Lee, in 1965. Lee had altered the contours of the land to accommodate his used car parts business but the house, shed, and barn, though deteriorated, were relatively unchanged. The New Hampshire Division of Parks, which administers the Homestead, is now in the process of restoring the buildings and furnishing them with items appropriate to the period of Frost's residence; the poet's daughter, Mrs. Leslie Frost Ballentine, is assisting in this work. Completion of the project and the official opening of the Homestead as an historic site are scheduled for the fall of 1975. The Division of Parks hopes eventually to restore the original contours of the farm and to acquire some 63 acres of adjoining land for creation of a visitor center and recreation area.

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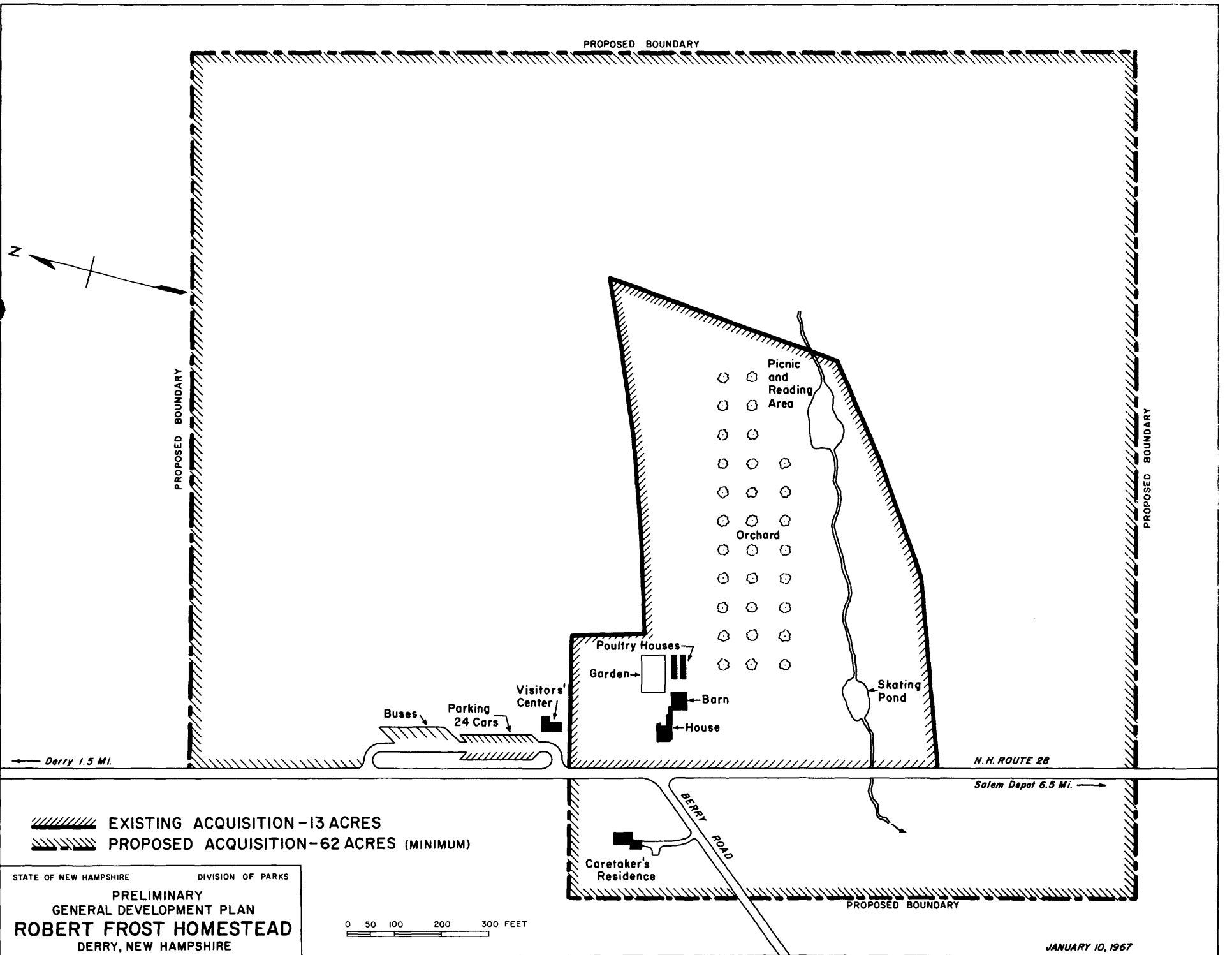
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CONTINUATION SHEET Frost Homestead ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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- Frost, Robert. Complete Poems of Robert Frost (New York, 1964).  
Gould, Jean. Robert Frost: The Aim Was Song (New York, 1964).  
Munson, Gorham B. Robert Frost (Chicago, 1962).  
Spiller, Robert E., et. al. Literary History of the United States,  
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Thompson, Lawrance. Fire and Ice: the Art and Thought of Robert Frost (New York,  
1942).  
Thompson, Lawrance, Ed. Selected Letters of Robert Frost (New York, 1964).  
Untermeyer, Louis. Robert Frost: A Backward Look (Washington, D.C., 1964).



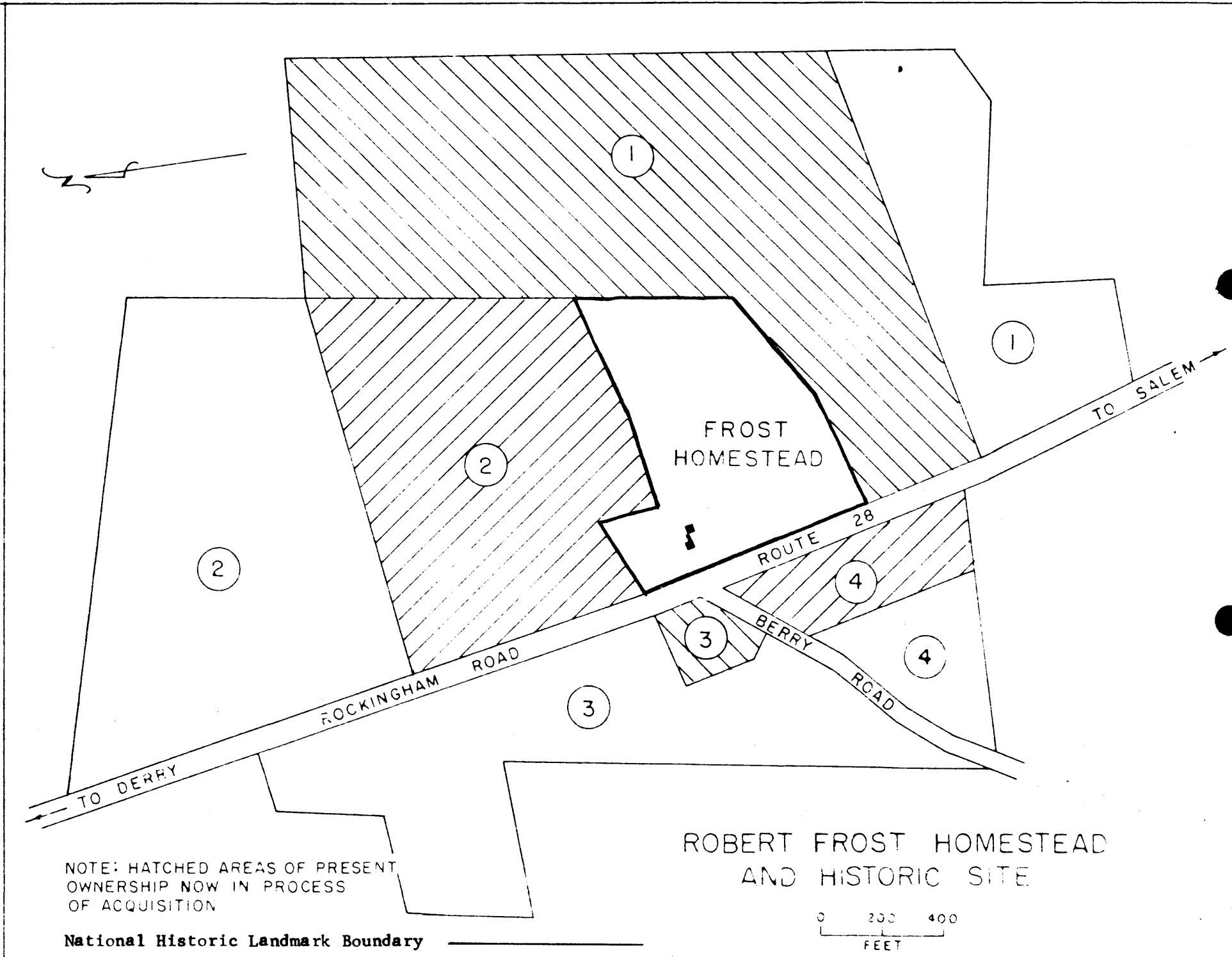
 EXISTING ACQUISITION - 13 ACRES  
 PROPOSED ACQUISITION - 62 ACRES (MINIMUM)

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE      DIVISION OF PARKS  
 PRELIMINARY  
 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
**ROBERT FROST HOMESTEAD**  
 DERRY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

0 50 100 200 300 FEET

JANUARY 10, 1967





NOTE: HATCHED AREAS OF PRESENT OWNERSHIP NOW IN PROCESS OF ACQUISITION

National Historic Landmark Boundary

ROBERT FROST HOMESTEAD AND HISTORIC SITE

0 200 400  
FEET