

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
Locust Grove, the Samuel F. B. Morse House
AND/OR COMMON
Locust Grove

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER		___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION	
370 South Street, Box 103			
CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	
Poughkeepsie		25	
___ VICINITY OF			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
New York	36	Dutchess	27

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
___DISTRICT	___PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	___UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL	___PARK
___STRUCTURE	___BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL	___PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	___ENTERTAINMENT	___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT	___SCIENTIFIC
	___BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL	___TRANSPORTATION
		___NO	___MILITARY	___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Huguenot Historical Society, Inc.
STREET & NUMBER
14 Forest Glen
CITY, TOWN
New Paltz
VICINITY OF
STATE
New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dutchess County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Poughkeepsie
STATE
New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None
DATE
___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Locust Grove, the Samuel F. B. Morse House, was originally the name of an eighteenth century house on the same location, owned by Robert Livingston, Jr. This property was sold to John Montgomery, who removed the old house and built a rectangular two story frame building in 1830. In 1847, Morse purchased the house as a summer home, and used the standing structure as the nucleus for a cruciform Italianate villa, renamed Locust Grove, which the inventor completed in 1852.

Morse's renovations designed with the assistance of Alexander Jackson Davis, the architect, began with the two story additions of rooms on the north and south ends of the existing house. The room on the south end, which eventually served as his study, was three sided and gave the southern facade of the house an octagonal shape. An octagonal, one story veranda was constructed around this end as well, and it is decorated with cast-iron lattice work. The addition on the northern end was a simple extension of the rectangular dimensions of the original house.

At the same time Morse constructed a bisecting axis, running east to west through the main house. On the west side, a four story, rectangular tower, of stuccoed brick was erected. On the east side, a porte-cochere, of the same dimensions as the tower, was constructed, with another room above, under a gable roof. The three round-headed passageways in the porte-cochere are topped with hood moulds. On the eastern end of the second story of the porte-cochere there is a modified Palladian window. The other windows which average approximately one per bay, have simple frames, supported by consoles. The other exceptions to this are the round-headed windows at the fourth story of the tower, which are grouped three to a side. There is a small balcony projecting below these windows on the west facade of the tower. This balcony is repeated at the third story, however this octagonal balcony is supported by the octagonal bays which project from the west wall of the tower at the second and first stories.

The house, which contains a basement and a subbasement, is supported on stone foundations. The attic, at the third floor level, is covered with a gable roof of slate tiles. The south end of the house however has an adjoining three-sided hip roof, while the tower has a separate hip roof. The main house has a bracketed cornice, while the tower has rafter ends protruding from the eaves.

The interior of the house has remained substantially unchanged since Morse's occupancy, although the north room on the first floor has been enlarged and the wood floors have been replaced. Some of Morse's furnishings remain, although the bulk of the current items date from the posthistoric period.

The grounds of Locust Grove still consist of the approximately 10½ acres which Morse purchased in 1847. Most of the land is kept as lawn, pasture and woodland. The area in front of the house is still planted with trees, many of which are

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1847-1871 (Morse's occupancy) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although it was not until May 24, 1844, that Samuel Finley Breese Morse telegraphed his famous message "What hath God wrought!" from Washington to Baltimore, he had been working on a long-range telegraph since 1832 and had acquired his patent in 1837. Despite the claims of various other inventors, Morse's patent has been upheld, and he is universally credited as the father of the telegraph.

Morse purchased "Locust Grove" in Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1847. He had been a wanderer for years, yet he returned to Locust Grove summer after summer, adding sections to the original house and making it very much his own home. Locust Grove has remained substantially unchanged since Morse's occupancy, and is presently undergoing restoration for use as a museum.

Biography

The inventor of the telegraph was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, on April 27, 1791. Upon being graduated from Yale in 1810, Morse determined to follow painting as a career and sailed to England in order to study under Washington Allston. The young artist returned to the United States in 1815 and for 15 years practiced his profession with artistic success, but financial failure. He again set out for Europe in 1829, where he spent the next three years studying, painting and travelling. During his wanders through France, Morse observed the French semaphore telegraph and saw how it sped the transmission of messages. With the benefit of more than just an elemental knowledge of electricity, the artist apparently for the first time, began to wonder if an electrical telegraph could be developed.

Morse boarded the Sully in the fall of 1832 to make the return trip to the United States. Dr. Charles T. Jackson, an eminent American scientist, was a fellow passenger of Morse's and one evening the two became engaged in conversation. The talk turned to electricity at one time and during the course of the discussion Morse said that it should be possible to send messages by electricity. Stimulated by the ensuing discussion, Morse, upon returning to his cabin, sketched the basic idea for an electrical telegraph in a notebook. This marked a turning point in his life.

Upon his arrival in New York on November 16, Morse began to devote more and more time to developing the telegraph. By 1835 the inventor's apparatus could send a message a very short distance and print it. Morse continued to improve his telegraph with the help of others and in September 1837 he exhibited the improved

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- S. Sydney Bradford, "Locust Grove," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, 5/20/63.
- George Harvey Genzmer, "Samuel F. B. Morse," Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1943), vol. xiii.
- Carleton Mabee, The American Leonardo (New York, 1943).
- Robert L. Thompson, Wiring a Continent (Princeton, 1947).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 108 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	589280	4614350	B	18	589270	4614350
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	588000	4614350	D	18	588000	4614340

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet)

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

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey - National Park Service

DATE

1/28/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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 the landmarks have been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Designated: JAN 29 1964
Date

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Boundary Certified:

TITLE

DATE

Rego E. Emery
Feb 14, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

4/24/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

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locusts. The position of the house affords broad vistas of the Hudson River and the Catskills to the west, and the Fishkill Mountains to the south. No outbuildings which date to Morse's period are extant. The stables, the barn, the gardener's cottage, the toolshed, greenhouse and other extant outbuildings all date from 1900 or later.

Locust Grove was maintained as a private residence, until 1975, when the property was deeded to the Huguenot Historical Society for use as a historic house museum.

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instrument before a number of colleagues. He applied for a patent in the same month.

Completely abandoning painting in 1837, Morse began the long arduous struggle to have his invention accepted by the public. He first travelled to England and France to secure patents, but both nations rejected his claims. Returning to America, Morse sought to gain support from the National Government. Not until 1843 did he meet with success, when Congress, just before it ended its 1843 session, appropriated \$30,000 for the construction of an experimental line between Washington and Baltimore. Securing permission from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to place a line along its right-of-way, Morse quickly inaugurated the project. Workmen initially ran the wire through pipes and then buried the pipes, but after eight or ten miles of wire had been laid faulty transmission forced a halt. It was this crisis that compelled Morse to turn to poles, and during the winter the laborers removed the wire from the pipe. With the return of warmer weather, poles were erected and the wire strung over them. Morse's line ran from the Supreme Court Chamber in the capitol to the Baltimore and Ohio depot on Pratt Street by early May 1844, and on May 24 he tapped out the now immortal phrase, "What hath God wrought."

Morse's remaining 27 years continued to be full ones. He engaged in numerous activities, one of the most important being the defense of his invention. Between 1848 and 1854 he was involved in almost continuous litigation over the telegraph, and only in the latter year did the courts proclaim him to be the inventor of the telegraph. Morse died in 1871, honored the world over for his contribution to the advancement of mankind.

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See Survey Map

Beginning at the point on U.S. Route 9 where the Young property line and the Earl J. Teed property line coincide, proceed north along the western curb of Route 9 700', more or less, to a point; thence west 1400', more or less, to a point; thence north 250', more or less, to a point; thence west 1650', more or less, to a point; thence south 1800', more or less, to a point; thence east 850', more or less, to a point; thence south 430', more or less, to a point; thence west 1300', more or less, to a point; thence north 1100', more or less, to a point; thence east to the point of origin.