

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**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

William Lloyd Garrison House; "Rockledge"

AND/OR COMMON

William Lloyd Garrison House; St. Monica's Home

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

125 Highland Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Boston (Roxbury)

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Suffolk

CODE

025

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

\_\_DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_SITE

\_\_OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

\_\_PUBLIC

PRIVATE

\_\_BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_MUSEUM

\_\_PARK

\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: Nursing Home

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Episcopal Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret

STREET & NUMBER

17 Louisburg Square

CITY, TOWN

Boston

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Suffolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Suffolk County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

**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		

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

The William Lloyd Garrison House stands on a rock ledge (the source of the building's original name) above the western side of Highland Street in the Roxbury district of Boston. The steep slope in front of the house is broken by a curving walkway and dotted with flower beds, small shrubs, and mature trees. The remainder of the property is occupied by buildings and a hard-topped parking lot.

Though the exact date of the Garrison House is not known, it appears to date from the mid-19th century. Contemporary photographs indicate that during Garrison's ownership, the house was a rather typical example of an upper-middle-class suburban residence, consisting of a 2-story main block, a 2-story wing, and a 1-story ell, all of frame and clapboard with a gabled roof. The main block, 3 bays wide and 1 bay deep, carried heavy quoins at each corner and a bracketed cornice at the eaves. An open porch ran the length of the front (east) facade; supported on paired square posts, it also carried a bracketed cornice. The center bay of the second floor projected above the porch to form an oriel. Among the most interesting features of the house was its main entrance, a paneled door with flanking lights whose molded surrounds formed a trefoil pattern at the top.

A number of changes have been made in the exterior detailing of the house. The corner quoins have been removed and the original clapboards covered with siding (except on the front elevation under the porch). A second oriel, supported on simple brackets, has been added to the north side of the wing. A glass-enclosed porch, possibly dating from the 1920's, and a metal fire escape have appeared on the south side of the house. The 1-story ell has been replaced with a roughly square 2-story structure with mansard roof. Despite these alterations (and their combined negative effect), the basic massing of the main block and wing is unchanged and enough original detailing remains to suggest the 19th century character of the building.

The interior of the Garrison House has also undergone a number of changes during its use by St. Monica's Home. Only two-spaces--the stairhall and the parlor, to the right (north)--are essentially unaltered. The remaining ground floor rooms have been remodeled to provide office space, a dining room, and modern kitchen for the administrative staff of the Home. Second floor rooms have been subdivided to provide sleeping quarters for the staff; however, the work does not appear to have involved any permanent changes in the basic structure of the house.

At the rear of the house (connected to it through the new mansard structure) is a relatively large 2-story brick addition constructed in 1961-63. All patient care facilities for St. Monica's Home are now located in this new building. To the west of the addition, across a hard-topped parking lot, is a small brick structure with mansard roof, probably dating from the late 19th century. Apparently constructed as a carriage house, this structure has been converted for use as a residence. Neither the addition nor the carriage house contributes to the national significance of the Garrison House.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

1864-1879

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

not known

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This modest 2-story wooden house, located on Highland Street in the Roxbury district of Boston, Massachusetts, was for 15 years the home of William Lloyd Garrison, the most articulate and influential advocate of the abolitionist movement in the United States. Through public lectures and editorials in the Liberator, the newspaper which he founded in 1831, Garrison argued unequivocally--and sometimes violently--for immediate emancipation. In his own eyes, Garrison was "an antidote to American complacency;" to the opponents of abolition he was the "Massachusetts Madman" and the "Prince of New England Infidelity."

Garrison occupied the Roxbury house, originally known as "Rockledge," from 1864 until his death in 1879. The house was owned for a time by the Rockledge Association, an organization of black men and women formed to preserve the building, but in 1904 was acquired by the Episcopal Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret, a nursing order. The Garrison House is now operated as St. Monica's Home, a nursing facility for needy, elderly women and is not open to the public.

## Historical Background

Born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on December 10, 1805, Garrison was apprenticed to a Newburyport printer at the age of 14. Before completing his apprenticeship in 1825, he had become an expert printer and had written a number of articles for the newspaper published by his employer. In 1826, Garrison purchased a local paper which he named The Free Press. As its editor, he wrote an anti-slavery editorial favoring gradual emancipation and was the first to publish the poetry of John Greenleaf Whittier.

The Free Press soon failed and Garrison moved to Boston where he worked first as a printer. In the spring of 1828, he became joint editor of the National Philanthropist, a newspaper devoted to the temperance movement. During this period he met Benjamin Lundy, who was already active in the anti-slavery movement. Lundy influenced him to join the movement. After spending a brief period in Vermont as editor of the Journal of the Times, Garrison returned to Boston in March 1829, where on Independence Day, he delivered the first of his innumerable public addresses against slavery.

Late in the summer of 1829, Garrison went to Baltimore, where he joined with Lundy in the editing of the Genius of Universal Emancipation. Through the editorials of this paper Garrison became one of the first to demand "immediate and complete emancipation" of slaves. Lundy, a moderate abolitionist, soon despaired of Garrison's increasingly violent views and, after Garrison had been imprisoned for one of his articles about slavery, expressed little regret at the latter's decision to return to the North.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Korngold, Ralph. Two Friends of Man (Boston, 1950).  
 Madison, Charles A. Critics and Crusaders (New York, 1947).  
 Merrill, Walter M. Against Wind and Tide (Cambridge, Ma., 1963).  
 Thomas, John L. The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison (Boston, 1963).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .74

UTM REFERENCES

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

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 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by S. Sydney Bradford, Historian, 3/18/65

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service</u>	
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street N.W.</u>	<u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington</u>	<u>D.C.</u>

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE     

Landmark  
 Designated JUNE 23, 1965  
 Designated according to the  
Antiquities Act (Public Law 89-665).  
 Date 8/19/77  
 Boundary Certified:  
*[Signature]*

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 designated 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	
<i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <u>7/15/77</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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William Lloyd

CONTINUATION SHEET Garrison House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

During the Fall of 1830, Garrison lectured in eastern cities and founded his famous periodical, the Liberator, the first number of which was issued January 1, 1831. Although the paper seldom met its expenses and never had more than 3,000 subscribers, it aroused the Nation as few newspapers have. In it, Garrison spoke unequivocally for immediate abolition. Only after the ratification of the 13th Amendment did he cease publication of the paper, the final issue being printed on December 29, 1865.

While the Liberator carried the message of immediate abolition, Garrison labored in additional ways to further that cause. He organized the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832; wrote a pamphlet, "Thoughts on African Colonization" (1832), attacking the scheme to send freed slaves to Africa; and visited English abolitionists in 1833. On his return to Boston, a mob erected a gallows in front of Garrison's house because of his denunciation of American slavery while in England. Shortly thereafter, in December, 1833, Garrison helped to establish the American Anti-Slavery Society at Philadelphia. On September 4, 1834, Garrison married Helen Benson, who bore him seven children and unfailingly supported him in his work.

Neither the Liberator nor Garrison's other abolitionist activities gained the applause of most of the influential men in the North, let alone the South. In Boston, the best elements of the community sponsored an anti-abolitionist meeting in Faneuil Hall in August, 1835; and in October, 1835, Garrison barely escaped serious injury, perhaps death, when a mob broke up a meeting of the Female Anti-Slavery Society and dragged him through the streets.

Some of Garrison's other activities also did little to endear him to the established order. His religious views especially angered the clergy, who had already denounced him for his abolitionist work. Garrison had come to reject a dogmatic approach to Christianity, believing that religion was essentially "love" and not dependent on any outward form. This liberal view led him to convene a meeting in Boston in 1840 to discuss religion; to hold an Anti-Sabbath Convention in Boston in 1848; and to suggest a meeting in Hartford in 1853 to debate whether or not the Bible was divinely inspired.

Notwithstanding Garrison's desire to promote liberal religious views, abolitionism remained his basic crusade. Because he felt no practical progress had been made toward freeing the slaves by 1842, he began to recommend the splitting of the Union. Twelve years later, on July 4, 1854, in a shockingly radical action, he burned copies of the United States Constitution, the Fugitive Slave Law, and some legal decisions respecting slavery. But by 1854, his views had become more popular in the North, and during the remainder of the decade more and more people adopted his position. Indeed, when the Civil War came in 1861, Garrison had done more than anyone else to establish the moral nature of the conflict.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Garrison House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

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Following the Civil War and the demise of the Liberator, Garrison lived in semi-retirement at "Rockledge," the house at Roxbury, Massachusetts, which he had purchased in 1864. Although his physical activity was greatly limited by two painful accidents, Garrison's mental activity and his interest in social reform were undiminished. He continued his campaigns for prohibition, women's rights, and justice for the American Indian until his death in 1879.

The Garrison House was maintained for a time by the Rockledge Association, an organization of black men and women, but in 1904 was acquired by the Episcopal Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret. Founded in England as a nursing order, this community had come to the United States in 1873 to direct a small hospital for children at Boston and in 1888 had founded St. Monica's Home for black women and children. The Home was moved from its original Beacon Hill location to the Garrison House shortly after the 1904 purchase. Now a nursing facility for needy elderly women, the building is not open to the general public.

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Garrison House

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

10

PAGE

2

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of the western curb line of Highland Street and the northern line of property at 131 Highland Street; proceeding thence in a northerly direction along the said curb line of Highland Street 95 feet, more or less, to a point; continuing thence along the property line of adjacent tracts fronting on Highland Street and Highland Park Street in a northwesterly direction 265 feet, more or less, to a point on the easterly curb line of Highland Park Street; continuing thence in a southwesterly direction along said curb line 116 feet, more or less, to a point on the northerly line of property fronting at 31 Fort Avenue; continuing thence in a southeasterly direction along the north property lines of properties 31, 29, and 27, fronting on Fort Avenue 73 feet, more or less, to a point; continuing thence in a northerly direction along the westerly line of lot 25 fronting on Fort Avenue 25 feet, more or less, to the northerly line of the same lot 25; continuing thence in a southeasterly direction along the northerly lines of lots 25, 23, 21, 19, and 17, fronting on Fort Avenue, 135 feet more or less to a point on the westerly line of lot 131, fronting on Highland Street; continuing thence in a northerly direction along the westerly line of said lot 131, 35 feet, more or less, to a point at the northwest corner of said lot 131, continuing thence in an easterly direction along the northerly line of said lot 131, 85 feet more or less to the point of beginning.

