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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name May, Asa, House

other names/site number Blood Brook Farm

2. Location

street & number Town Highway 4 (Blood Brook Road) N/A not for publication

city or town West Fairlee N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Orange code 017 zip code 05083

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Feb 22, 1993  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Vermont State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 4/7/93  
**Entered in the National Register**

May, Asa, House  
Name of Property

Orange County, Vermont  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
4	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal  
No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
walls weatherboard  
roof metal  
other wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1May, Asa, House  
West Fairlee, Orange Co, VT

The Asa May House property consists of a c.1800 Federal style house and a c.1900 horse barn with an attached c.1850 woodshed on forty acres on Blood Brook Road in the town of West Fairlee. The house is a well-preserved two story, hip-roofed, wood frame, clapboarded building in the Federal style built on an L-plan with two five bay wide main facades and symmetrical interior brick chimney stacks. The exterior is distinguished by its two entryways. The south front nine panel door is framed by pilasters, a denticulated cornice, and a transom and sidelights with quarrel panes. The other entry has nine panel door, panelled pilasters with entasis, and a transom. The interior is distinguished for its molded wooden trim and fireplaces with Federal style mantelpieces. The horse barn is the surviving large outbuilding on the property; other barns and sheds burned c.1970. The associated farmland retains the integrity of its significant original pattern of spatial organization. Overall this property retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The property includes the following resources:

1. Asa May House, c.1800.

The 5x5 bay, 2 story, hip roofed main block appears almost square in plan, but actually has an 'L' plan with an original 1-1/2 story, hip roofed wing in-fill (the wing originally had a shed roof). A remodelled, 1 story, gable roofed wing projects to the north and a 1 story porch built in 1989 extends from the northwest rear corner of the house.

The main block has a brick/concrete block/stone foundation, clapboard siding and a sheet metal roof with symmetrically placed interior brick chimney stacks. Metal roofing first replaced the original roofing material c. 1914. The facade is articulated with clapboard siding, plain cornerboards and a complex molded box cornice of moderate projection. Sash on the principal facades is

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May, Asa, House  
West Fairlee, Orange CO., VT

12/12 replacement of c. 1960, plain trim with cornice cap moldings and flanking louvered wood shutters. This sash replicates the original, although 2/2 sash was present from c. 1899 after many were broken in a hailstorm.<sup>1</sup> Modern sash types from c. 1950 and 1986 are confined to the west rear facade.

Formal entrances grace the south and east facades. That on the south front features an oversized Federal style door with 9 panels set under a 4-light transom in a plain surround with a denticulated cornice. The entrance was sheltered from 1901 until 1988 by a low-pitched, hip-roofed<sup>2</sup> porch with a bracketed cornice and supported by square posts. The more formal east entrance is detailed with a nine panel door, panelled flanking pilasters with entasis, a frieze and cornice, a transom with quarrel panes, and a modillioned cornice with a wide projection. Flanking half-length sidelights outside the door enframingent have molded cornice caps, quarrel panes, and shutters. Another entrance to the main block, evident on the north facade in a photo of 1923, is no longer in evidence.

The 1-1/2 story wing in the 'L' of the house plan originally had a shed roof with a west window added in May 1899.<sup>3</sup> The hip roof replaced the original roof c. 1986. The exterior reflects renovations of c. 1950.

The 1 story wing projecting to the north from the above mentioned wing was renovated in 1989 when a 1 story, screen porch and deck were added to the northwest corner of the residence. The wing originally had an entrance porch on the east facade with entrances on the south to the kitchen entry hall and on the west to the wellroom and water closet (privy). The privy was moved in 1988 (see #4). A dwelling house originally located a mile back in a pasture had at one time been moved to the west of the wellroom, was known as the hog-house and was also used for storage. It had feather-

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<sup>1</sup> Letters of Robert C. Morey, quote from diary of Lucy May Child (his mother), May 2, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. quote from diary May 21, 1901 - June 3, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. quote from diary May 1, 1899.

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edged boards and large pine panels on the interior.<sup>4</sup> It deteriorated and was removed c. 1950. A one story porch extends from the wing. Built in 1989 and partially enclosed, it has a sheet metal, hip roof.

Figure 1 is a sketch map of the interior of the house floor plan provided by the present owner, Edwin C. Mead. Robert C. Morey, a descendent of the original owners who was born in the house in 1917, has provided several reminiscences which will be used to provide information about the property during the early 20th century prior to remodelling in 1950.

The cellar runs under the southern portion of the house. Walls that are rubble below grade are composed of flat, thin stones and topped by brick and/or concrete block above grade. The framing timbers are numbered with Roman numerals. The south chimney is supported by a large piece of granite about 11 feet long, 7 feet wide and 14 inches thick that forms the roof of a stone chamber used for cold storage. The cellar steps from the kitchen on the main floor are composed of cut beams. A jelly cupboard at the top of the cellar stairs has a beaded vertical board door. The holding tank for a gravity fed spring is located in the cellar. The large access from the west side of the house was enlarged c. 1930 when a large wood furnace was installed and wood was transported into the cellar by oxen.

The interior, northwest corner of the first floor of the main block housing the kitchen was renovated c. 1950 and may have originally functioned as a summer kitchen. It presently is a large room with modern trim profile, modern sash, molded baseboards, utility island, and a large chimney stack with a brick wall added over. A stovepipe chimney access is covered by a cupboard on the brick wall and a pantry accessed from the kitchen is between the chimney and rear, north exterior wall. Several doors lead from the kitchen: to the rear stairway, to the closet under the stairs, to the sitting room (original kitchen), to the cellar, to the front hall, to the dining room, to the dish cupboard, and to the pantry. There are mixed types of iron latches throughout. The back stairway exhibits an example of the type of original 6 panel door with molded rails

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Child Morey, The Blood Brook Valley, p.26.

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and stiles on the kitchen face and is juxtaposed with a modern 6 panel door into the sitting room.

The arrangement of this kitchen space in the early 20th century differed: an entry hall from the wing was lit by transom lights and contained an icebox, a door to the left (east) led to the kitchen, a door straight ahead led to an entry cupboard where a dark storage room with shelves provided space for flour and baking supplies. The pantry between the kitchen and dining room had doors opening into each room as well as a north window (the present pantry has no dining room access and no window). There was a wood water barrel (usually with a live trout) between the pantry and sink on the north wall that had a direct constant water supply and an outside drain. Several more doors led from the kitchen: one into a small bedroom behind the kitchen (now bathroom not accessed from this room), and a second entry into the basement that was nailed shut.

The present sitting room in the southwest corner of the plan was originally a kitchen. It features a brick fireplace with a large granite lintel, brick hearth, bracketed mantel (c.1950), beehive oven with a metal door marked "Bradford Furnace," and a firebox below the oven. Sash has continuous molding along the top and sides of the plain trim. The room was remodelled c.1950 with a multi-light picture window in the back wall of the house. The window has grouped 6/6 sash, built-in bookshelves and a panelled end wall around the fireplace. Modern six panel doors lead into the present kitchen, south entrance hall, and bathroom.

A bathroom of c. 1930 occupies the central western portion of the plan. Formerly a bedroom, or "hired hands" room, it features a shelved closet under the back stairs and a tongue and groove vertical panel door. Cabinets are articulated in the same tongue and groove manner.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Morey letters: ~~2-1930~~ Mr. Morey states that the small bedroom back of the kitchen was used in cold weather by his grandmother until her death, in that room, in 1929. His father died in the room in 1934. A long closet extended from this bedroom, south all along the west wall of the house, entered by doors from the bedroom and sitting room. In the early 1930's the closet was cut in half to allow installation of a full bathroom in the south end, with

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May, Asa, House  
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The south front entry hall has a "funeral door" which is an oversized, 9 panel door in the Federal style with molded rails and stiles. The entrance hall also features a door to a closet by the chimney stack which is an original 6 raised panel door with molded rails and stiles set in plain trim with continuous perimeter molding of the cyma recta type.

The southeast parlor is distinguished by a brick fireplace with a stone lintel, slate hearth, a surround comprised of a shouldered architrave molding, and a compound cornice mantel shelf above a frieze articulated with glyphs. The room is detailed with a molded chair rail and baseboard. The 6 panel doors are original with hand planing evident. Architrave moldings with simple cornices set off door and window openings.

The east entrance hall features a straight run, closed string staircase with a square newel post with a pyramidal cap, molded handrail and square balusters. The 6 panel entrance door has molded rails and stiles. The hall is articulated with a molded chair rail, plain baseboard, and simple beaded door trim with a continuous cornice molding.

The formal dining room in the northeast corner of the first floor plan is notable for its ornate fireplace. The brick opening has a granite lintel, granite hearth, fluted mantel pilasters, oval medallion in the pilaster architrave, a rectangular panel centered in the architrave, "fluted" frieze and wide, compound cornice shelf. The overmantel mirrors the design of the lower mantelpiece with a continuous "fluted" frieze border and a cornice cap molding. The room has a molded baseboard and the molded chair rail exhibits the same fluting detail. Door and window trim has architrave molding. An old photograph of 1923 shows that there was an exterior door on the north side of the room; no evidence of this exists today. Reference in letters of occupant Robert Morey point to the existence of an entrance to the pantry no longer in evidence that was located on the north side of the fireplace.

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windows opening to the west. This space is now entirely occupied by a bathroom, which may have been remodelled and enlarged c. 1950.

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The second floor of the house has bedrooms and has about the same plan as the first floor (see Fig. 1). The bedroom in the northeast corner features a fireplace and flanking closets. The mantelpiece has architrave trim, a wide plain frieze, a denticulated cornice and a wide molded cornice shelf. The room has eight-panel doors with raised panels and molded rails and stiles. Door trim is beaded around the opening with a continuous fillet ovolo molding. Window trim is plain with a continuous quirk ogee molding.

The southeast corner bedroom has a small entrance hall with a closet having a door with 2 long vertical panels, plain rails and stiles and plain trim with a bead around the closet opening. The doors to the stairhall and from the entry hall to the room have 4 raised panels and molded rails and stiles. The fireplace on an end wall with painted, vertical boarding is brick with a granite face and lintel, brick hearth, and architrave trim in a crosseted, plain surround with a cornice mantel shelf. The room is further detailed with molded baseboards and plain window trim with a quirk ogee molding around the perimeter. A large closet over the south entrance hall displays original 12/12 sash. It differs from the replacement sash throughout the house by having wider profile muntins with more definite transitions in molding articulation.

A former small bedroom over the east entrance hall served as sleeping quarters for the "hired girl" in the early 20th century. It was converted to a bathroom c. 1987. It features an 8 panel door access from the southeast bedroom and a hand planed 4 panel door which is plainly articulated on the inside and has raised panels with molded rails and stiles on the outside (stair hall side).

The southwest corner bedroom is simply articulated with molded baseboards and quirk ogee molding. There is no fireplace in evidence, although the Morey letters indicate that the stovepipe from the room below passed through this room before entering the south chimney, thereby providing some heat. The two windows facing south are original, with that on the west being cut c. 1916. Due to the lack of a fireplace in this room, it may be that this was originally unfinished and is the "new west room" referred to in diary entries quoted in the Morey letters, finished by the carpenter, Mr. Still, in May of 1899.



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original finish. It was originally known as the back chamber. The small room beside the stairs is now a bathroom/laundry (added c.1950) and has modern quirk ogee molding. It was used in the early 20th century as the hired man's room. The small room in the northwest corner over the present kitchen was known as the dark place, and later as the sky parlor after a window was added in 1899.<sup>6</sup> Originally there was a shed roof. The hip roof was added recently. The original door to this room is 4 panel with molded rails and stiles set in plain trim with a bead around the opening.

**2. Horse Barn, c.1900.**

This 1 1/2 story, balloon-framed building has a sheet metal gable roof, clapboard siding, and a stone foundation. It is approximately 40' x 50' and has cornerboards, a frieze, and a simple box cornice. The main entry is a sliding door in the eaves front. To the right of the door is a 12/12 window, and on top is a short but wide loft door. Other windows have a variety of sash; the 12 pane sashes appear to be some of the original windows from the house. There are four stall windows on the east gable end wall and a fixed 12 pane sash in the gable peak. Hay doors are located on the east gable end as well as above the sliding vertical board door on the south eaves facade. Wire cables run north to south in the upper level of the barn. Letters of William Morey quoting diary entries of his mother indicate that the foundation was laid on November 2 and 3, 1899, the superstructure was raised on May 12, 1900, and on June 7 workers shingled the structure. The barn was finished on August 11, 1900. Frank Chesley laid the foundation, and Mr. Cook and Mr. Still served as carpenters in the construction of the building. It originally had three regular horse stalls and a box stall, with a manure pen attached on the north side. A small milkroom (still evident) was built into the northwest corner c.1937.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. quote from his mother's diary: Mon., May 1, 1899 "Mr. Still finished carpenter work in the new west room and put a window in the dark place.", Tues., May 2, 1899 "Ironed this morning and cleared up the sky parlor."

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May, Asa, House  
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3. Woodshed, c.1850.

This simple, 1 1/2 story, post and beam building is 2 x 1 1/2 bays with hewn timbers and is attached to the front of the horse barn. The shed has a hay door, a wide, rectangular access, clapboard siding, a metal roof, plain cornerboards, and simple trim. It apparently was moved to this location. The northeast corner of the shed contained the ice house.

4. Shed, c.1800.

This 1 x 1 bay, 1 story, gable-roofed building with vertical plank siding was moved and remodelled when the c.1840 sheep barn on the site was torn down due to deterioration in 1988. It is non-contributing due to age and alteration. Serving as a wellroom and the privy in the 20th century and located west of the house wing, it was finished with wallpaper over plaster and lath, was well lighted by sunlight and electricity and was referred to as the "lib'ry."<sup>8</sup> This might have been the first structure on the farm, occupied by Asa May before the large house was built. However, discrepancies in the records indicate that this shed may have been constructed at the same time as the house, and that the building that was the original dwelling may have been removed after World War II.

5. Landscape.

Originally, the Asa May Farmstead comprised approximately 240 acres. The 40 acre core of the farmstead on which are situated the existing agricultural and domestic buildings are ideally located on open land with a gradual westerly slope just above the floodplain of the Blood Brook. The first dwelling and barn (supposedly occupied c.1789) on the property may have been further to the

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7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 from notes furnished by Ruth Meder, former owner, February, 1989. However, from the letters of Robert C. Morey, after the original dwelling house from the field had been moved to a place **in back of the wellroom of the house (which also contained the privy)**, it was called the hog-house, "gradually fell into disrepair and went out of existence sometime after World War II."


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southwest on land no longer in common ownership and which has reverted to forestland.<sup>10</sup> The former dwelling house became part of the Asa May House when a new site was chosen to build a more substantial residence and it was moved to a position adjoining the northwest wing. The location of the present farmstead was probably chosen as the location of the road became firmly established in order to increase the ease of access and to be in the closest proximity to the most fertile open crop and pasture land.

After the establishment of the new homestead, the agricultural outbuildings were constructed, the types and arrangement reflecting the changing trends of agriculture over the years. A fire in the early 1970's destroyed the largest complex of agricultural buildings to the northwest of the present surviving structures and there is presently no surface indication of their location. Figure 2 shows the buildings in this area and describes their functions: a straw barn (c. 1800), a large cattle barn (c. 1805) with silo (c. 1916), a long shed with a cattle pen (c. 1860), small cattle barn (c. 1800), chicken house (c. 1930) and the corn barn (c. 1870). All but the chicken house and corn barn were connected, a practice which became common by the mid-19th century. The cattle barn is also said to have housed the May family before the large house was built.<sup>11</sup> According to historic photos, the chicken house (not shown in Figure 2) was situated in front of the long shed. A garage of c. 1925 was located between the horse barn (#2) and the road.

The apple orchard on a west sloping hill on the east side of Blood Brook Rd. is located on a portion of the property formerly in common ownership with the resources described in the nomination. A cider mill was operated in a building a short distance north of the upper apple orchard in the 19th century, where a storage building

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10 Robert C. Morey:  "Stone walls indicating some of the boundaries and foundations of buildings were familiar to me, but would be hard to locate now because what was open land formerly is now forested. One of these cultivated fields contained a sheep barn...A dwelling house originally located nearly a mile back in the pasture had sometime been moved to a point back of the wellroom of our home."

11 Ibid.

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May, Asa, Farm  
West Fairlee, Orange Co., VT

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was later located (early 20th century).<sup>12</sup> A well in this orchard supplied water to the horsebarn (#2) and there are spring rights still deeded from this property. This same property on the east side of Blood Brook Road was also the location for the sugar house. It first was located some distance away and was moved in the 1860's to a short distance from the house up on the hill. The sugar house was again relocated in the 1900's to a point between the two former locations.

The pattern of land use and definition of the agricultural landscape had been established soon after Asa May occupied the property. It is evident that land set aside for mowing or crops, pasture and woods have maintained such divisions to the present. This may be due in part to the rather permanent separation one from the other by stone walls, as much as to the natural suitability of the land. The land originally a part of the farm to the west that has reverted to forest is situated on an easterly sloping hill, less suitable to crops or pasture than the flat intervalles along the brook. Stone retaining walls define the immediate landscape around the house as well: built into a south and west slope, retaining walls with steps support the lawn on the south front and west side of the house, where there is also a large entrance to the basement. Stone walls are evident along the roadways, marking boundaries of various fields and at the location of the shed (#4), where a sheep barn was established c. 1840 when sheep farming reached a peak in Vermont.

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12 Ibid.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c.1800 - c.1830

c.1900

Significant Dates

c.1800

c.1830

c.1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

May, Asa, House  
Name of Property

Orange County, Vermont  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ± 40 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	8
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7	2	4	2	8	0
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4	8	6	7	4	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

1	8
---	---

7	2	3	8	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	6	7	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

2 

1	8
---	---

7	2	4	1	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	6	6	9	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4 

1	8
---	---

7	2	4	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	8	6	7	4	6	0
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See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah Noble, Principal

organization Deborah Noble Associates date August 8, 1991

street & number P.O. Box 106 telephone (802) 695-2507

city or town Concord state Vermont zip code 05824

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Roland and Marianne Kuchel

street & number 3298 Aberfoyle Place N.W. telephone (202) 363-6320

city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20015

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Asa May House is significant as an excellent example in Vermont of the Federal style. It was built c.1800 for Capt. Asa May, who was West Fairlee's first town clerk. The house is noteworthy for the exterior for its L-plan with two main five bay facades, the double pile interior chimneys, the two entryways with their nine panel doors, and a transom and sidelights with quarrel pane windows framing one door and a transom above the other. Inside the house is noteworthy for an exceptional Federal style fireplace with an ornate mantel and finely detailed overmantel, panelled doors, and other original features. The horse barn is a good example of this kind of outbuilding. The landscape retains many of its historic features, such as stone walls, lot lines, and land use patterns. The property, owned by descendants of Asa May and in continuous agricultural use until c.1940, retains its integrity although it is no longer actively farmed.

It is significant that land subdivisions have not masked the original pattern of property ownership. The well preserved farmstead, consistency of lot lines, stone walls, plant materials and fossilized land use information representing the evolution of the farmscape are present precisely because of its continuous use until c. 1940 as a subsistence hill farm by several generations of one family. It remains evident that the land use followed naturally according to the physical characteristics of the topography and soil. The land that was the most level was the easiest to clear, till and mow for crops. This land continues to be in common ownership with the farmstead buildings. The land with slightly more slope and/or rocks was suitable for grazing animals, including sheep and cattle as evolving agricultural trends dictated, and rocks were removed from these fields to form permanent land use

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divisions in the form of stone walls. Portions of this land remain in common ownership and are subject to nomination. The land with the most slope and rocks, or with certain desirable species of trees, remained as forestland, serving the lumbering or maple sugar industry. The field patterns and clusters of human activity determined by surviving walls, fences, buildings and continuous similar land use in the farmstead are significant as important aspects of the agricultural landscape common to the mountainous areas of New England.

The accumulation of the agricultural property by Asa May in the late 18th century and its spatial organization determined by the original tract grants and natural features survive as indicators of agricultural and cultural traditions of the 19th century in Vermont. The preservation of the integrity of the Asa May farmstead through the decline of agriculture toward the end of the 19th century and through the Great Depression is significant and due precisely to the continued commitment of descendants of the original settler.

Capt. Asa May, born in Woodstock, Ct. in 1764, came to West Fairlee with his brother, Stephen, at an early date and settled at Blood Brook,<sup>1</sup> named after the c. 1778 settlement there by Elijah Blood.<sup>2</sup> The exact year that Asa settled in West Fairlee is not known, but Asa May is said to have completed building a farmhouse on Blood Brook c. 1789 (probably a smaller house on the property, not the present house).<sup>3</sup> When the town was organized on March 31, 1797, Asa May was elected the first town clerk.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Child, Gazetteer of Orange County, Vt: 1762 - 1888, Syracuse, NY: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1888, p. 508.

<sup>2</sup> Abby Maria Hemenway, Vt. Historical Gazetteer., Vol. II, Burlington, VT: Miss A. M. Hemenway, 1871, p. 912.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin C. Mead, "History of 250 Acre May Farm, Blood Brook, W. Fairlee", outline, 1990. This is conjecture on the part of the present owners.

<sup>4</sup> Child, Op. Cit., p. 508.



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The Child and May families were numerous in Woodstock, Ct., with several marriages between families of those names in the 18th century. Lucy May (daughter of Asa May, born in 1799) married Henry Child of Woodstock, Ct. in 1823 and inherited the farm at the time of her father's death in 1825.<sup>5</sup> The oldest of their three sons, Asa May Child was born in 1824 and inherited the farm upon his mother's death in 1843,<sup>6</sup> although he is not recognized as running the farm until 1857, when he married Mary Wadleigh.<sup>7</sup> Asa May Child served the town for several years in the capacities of selectman, justice, and notary. In 1888 he farmed 240 acres on Road 16<sup>8</sup> and raised five Durham cows and 100 high grade Merino sheep. It is significant that sheep farming continued to be a viable enterprise on the farm so late in the century, as large scale sheep farming had largely declined in Vermont by this time, due to western competition. Asa May Child also found an active market for fresh vegetables and farm produce c.1865 nearly at Copperfield (Ely) on the west edge of West Fairlee and Vershire. The fumes from the copper smelter made gardening in that vicinity impossible and there were approximately 2,000 inhabitants of that village by 1888.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mead, Op. Cit.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. It is interesting to note that in Hamilton Child's Gazetteer of Orange County, page 508, it states that Henry Child, who married Lucy May in 1823, emigrated to W. Fairlee c. 1827, and that their child, Asa May Child was born in Woodstock, Conn. in 1824, moving to Vermont when he was 3 years old. This information would indicate that Lucy May moved back to Woodstock, Ct. to marry Henry Child, moving back to Vermont with her family subsequent to inheriting the farm from her father. This is surmised due to the fact that she was born in 1799 after her father, Asa May, had settled in W. Fairlee and presumably would have grown up with her family in Vermont.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Child Morey, The Blood Brook Valley, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Child, Op. Cit., p. 165 and 508.

<sup>9</sup> Morey, Op. Cit.

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Lucy May Child (born in 1872, the third daughter) married the hired man, William E. Morey, in 1892 and the couple inherited the farm in 1895 after her father's death in 1894. The couple ran the farm, with their only son, Robert Child Morey, born in 1907. Upon the death of Lucy May Child Morey in 1910, it is interesting to note that part of the house was reserved for the use of Lucy's mother, Mary Wadleigh Child, and her sister, Nellie May Child, influencing the manner in which the house was used until the Mary's death in 1929. Robert C. Morey inherited the farm after his father's death in 1934, staying there until the farm passed out of the family in 1946.

The development of the farmstead, from an original dwelling about a mile to the southwest with scattered barns, into a definite cluster of residential/agricultural buildings which are the subject of the nomination is typical of the evolution of subsistence agriculture and the small-scale family farm in Vermont. The multi-purpose agricultural production involving small-scale family farming, home-industry such as lumbering and mixed husbandry that was necessary for economic survival during the 19th century required an efficient arrangement of work areas. The existing farmstead buildings are typically laid-out at right angles to the road, with the present and former barns (some of which were moved from their more distant locations) arranged to shelter the barnyard formed to their south from the north wind. The large main house was used for living rooms, with the kitchen and rear ell containing the work areas. The centrally located working dooryard, formed by the rear ell and the north rear wall of the main block, is combined with the barnyard to facilitate interaction of the two primary work areas and was the most important focal point of the farmstead. The phenomenon of the connected farmstead evolved in northern New England to further the efficient functioning of the family farm, reaching a peak of popularity at the mid-19th century. The fact that the Asa May farmstead retains the earlier characteristic separation of the agricultural outbuildings from the residential buildings is a significant indicator of the primary period of its development at the beginning of the 19th century.

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The horse barn, built in 1900, is a typical and well-preserved example of a horse barn as described in the property types section of the Agricultural Resources of Vermont MPDF. Its form is typical of horse barns in rural areas, with an eaves front, central sliding door entry, small windows on one gable end marking the stable space inside, and second level hay loft doors. It is the only surviving agricultural building left on the property, the others having burned down in the early 1970s. The building is interesting because it has a documented date of construction (begun in November 1899 and completed in August 1900). It thus can be used to help date other such barns in the area.

The ownership pattern of the Asa May farmstead after it passed out of the family in 1946 is significant in illustrating an important statewide trend ensuring the preservation of its integrity. With a deliberate state-sponsored campaign at the beginning of the 20th century to sell Vermont as a tourist destination and vacation/retirement state came a new breed of seasonal, second-home owner. Specifically aimed at repopulating the state's deserted family farms, the campaign added to the tourist appeal of these properties for the "gentleman farmer", who had enough wealth to subsidize the reduced scale of agricultural activity in order to preserve the special qualities of this rural way of life. Tom and Vivien Johnson, owners of the property in the mid 1940s, and Howard Robinson, owner in the late 1940s, were associated with various colleges and used the house as a vacation residence. Joseph and Ruth Meder purchased the house in the 1950s and began restoration of the property. The property remained intact until 1986, when the house and current acreage was bought by Edwin Mead.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property being nominated is an oblong parcel of land approximately 40 acres in size and located on the west side of Town Highway #4 (Blood Brook Road), with a northern boundary approximately 1000 meters south of the intersection of Town Highway #4 and Town Highway #25. This parcel is recorded in Book 25, page 419 of the West Fairlee, Vermont, Land Records. The parcel begins at point A, which is located on the west side of Town Highway #4 approximately 1000 meters north of the house. The boundary thence proceeds southerly along the westerly right of way of Town Highway #4 approximately 5000 meters to point B; thence proceeds west-northwesterly approximately 3200 meters to point C; thence proceeds north-northeasterly approximately 4500 meters to point D; and thence proceeds easterly westerly approximately 2500 meters to the beginning (point A).

Verbal Boundary Justification:

The boundary is the parcel of land currently associated with the property. This is the core of the historic farmstead, and it retains much of its historic integrity. It is sufficient to convey the historic context of the property.



■ - now (1921)  
□ - formerly

FIGURE 1  
May, Asa, Farm, W. Fairlee, Vt.  
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