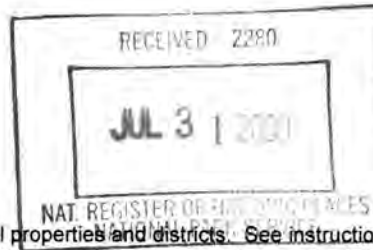


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1036

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 any 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 SAWYER HOMESTEAD

other names/site number MARY SAWYER'S HOUSE or MARY'S LITTLE LAMB HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 108 Maple St. not for publication

city or town Sterling vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01564

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Judith B. McDonough  
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

7/20/2000  
Date

State or 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 this 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

Patrick Anderson

Date of Action

9/13/00

Sawyer Homestead  
Name of Property

Worcester, MA  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

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

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

4 building

3 sites

       structures

       objects

7 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

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

VACANT/not in use

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL

EARLY REPUBLIC

MID 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other       

### Narrative Description

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

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1Sawyer Homestead  
Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA**Location and Setting**

The Sawyer Homestead is located in the town of Sterling, Massachusetts. Situated in the center of the state, in central Worcester County, Sterling is a town of a population of around 7,000. The homestead occupies a small, triangular-shaped, .33 acre lot at the intersection of Maple Street and Rugg Road in the eastern part of town. The terrain is relatively flat and is accented with stone fences, trees, shrubbery, and assorted plantings, some of which are heirloom varieties. The house is placed close to the southern angle of the site and stands only eight feet from the edge of Maple Street. On the western side of the property are two small conjoined outbuildings, a privy-woodshed and a garage in the guise of a Federal period carriage shed.

Both the buildings and the immediately surrounding landscape of the Sawyer Homestead preserve a distinct feeling of pre-20<sup>th</sup> century rural New England. This is so, even though today the property includes only a small portion of the 57.18 acres possessed by the Sawyer farm in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Illustration # 1) and even though there is on-going suburban residential development of the former farmland close around it. Especially during the growing season when they are covered with leaves, trees and brush along the south side of Maple Street and a small area of open space on the western side of the property help somewhat to give the illusion that the house still stands in a rural setting. Although most of the former Sawyer family farm has been sold for residential development, a 25.32 acre parcel of land (Sterling Assessor's Map 11/30) across Rugg Road, on the eastern side of the homestead site, functions as a buffer to the encroaching suburban development on that side. Placed in trust by the Sawyer family, this parcel was the site of a barn that accompanied the house until it was destroyed by arson on Halloween night in 1979. Illustration # 1 shows the locations of the barn and its outbuildings as they originally stood on the site. Attached newspaper clippings report on the fire that led to the demolition of the barn. Because of its historical relationship to the house, this parcel has been included as part of the National Register nomination.

The broader Kendall Hill-Redstone Hill neighborhood where the Sawyer Homestead is located is still partially rural in character, despite the increasing number of suburban developments in the area. Several working farms still exist here today, preserving for the neighborhood some of its historic open and agricultural landscape.

**House and Outbuilding****General Description**

The small, unassuming Sawyer house faces south toward Maple Street (Photos # 1, 2, 4). It is asymmetrical in its exterior arrangement and has practically no ornamental features. Of timberframe construction, it takes a one-and-a-half-story, four-bay, double-pile, side-gable form with an off-center chimney set to the rear of the roof ridge. The main entrance is in the second bay from the west end of the main facade. The house sits low to the ground with most of the foundation barely visible, as is often the case with very old houses. The foundations of both the front portion and the ell are of granite blocks and fieldstone with a section of brick veneer on the more broadly exposed eastern end of the front section. Attached to the north side of the main body of the house is a one-story, gable-roofed rear ell, four bays long and one bay deep (Illustration # 2 & Photo # 3). While the major portion of the front part of the house appears to date from the 18<sup>th</sup>

(continued)

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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

century, the ell seems to have been added in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Eaves of both the front and rear sections are close with no returns. Window and door frames are of the plain plank type. Plain corner blocks, characteristic of the Federal and Greek Revival styles of the early- and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, trim the door frame at the main entrance. Window sash are 6/9 and 6/6 and 2/2. The house is sided in clapboard.

Two outbuildings, joined to form an L-shaped plan, are located approximately twenty feet from the west side of the house. The portion of the building nearest the house was built to contain a two-hole privy as well as a shop, later used as an architect's office. It dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Projecting southward of it is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century one-car garage made to look like a Federal style cart shed.

**The Evolution of the Present House**

Both exterior and interior details indicate that the house in its present form is the result of several building campaigns. The oldest section of the structure forms the nucleus of the house today. This original portion, corresponding to the western three bays of the main façade and the western side gable, appears to have been one story in height and approximately 27 feet wide and 20 ½ feet deep. It contained three rooms arranged around an off-center, interior chimneystack. (see illustration #17) That plan, now altered, is characteristic of the "Square Plan" house form. The Square Plan, first known as the "Hemenway Plan", was identified in the 1980's by Myron Stachiw and Nora Pat Small while researching the Bixby House at Barre, Massachusetts, later moved to Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. This house form is now known to have been often used in Central Massachusetts and in other parts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Structurally, the Square Plan is characterized by three posts on each outer wall, cross girts, and an off-center chimney with no framed chimney bay.

The largest room of the Sawyer house in its original form was the 13 by 19 ½ foot kitchen that extended the full depth of the house on the western side. The other rooms included a parlor/bedroom measuring about 12 ½ by 11 feet and a small sitting room/bedroom of about 8 by 7 feet in size. Behind the chimneystack was a small passage connecting the sitting room to the kitchen. Entry was directly into the kitchen with no lobby or entry hall. Framing members, still visible today, projected into the interior living spaces. They include projecting corner posts and beams found in all of the original rooms and a transverse summer beam in what was the kitchen.

The early house was significantly expanded and remodeled in one or more stages, possibly beginning as early as the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further investigation is necessary to determine the precise dates and sequence of these alterations. An addition of 7 ½ feet was made to the east end of the original house, enlarging both the parlor and the sitting room. The plate was raised three feet to add a second floor "half-story" containing three bedrooms. The present stairway to the second floor seems to have been added in conjunction with the half-story addition. It is not clear whether or not the creation of an entry lobby from the southern third of the kitchen was part of this same effort. The original massive chimneystack was removed and replaced with a small brick chimney suitable for stoves and a closet occupying space to its north. The chimney alteration may have occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, at the same time as the addition of a one-story, three-room, rear service ell, which allowed the kitchen to be moved out of the main body of the house. The ell, measuring approximately 14 by 30 feet, was built to contain a new kitchen, a work room, and a pantry.

(continued)



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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA**EXTERIOR****Main Elevation**

The south-facing main facade is asymmetrical in appearance, with haphazard spacing between the window and door openings in its four-bay arrangement (west to east: window-door-window-window) (Photos # 1, 4). Moulding extending under the eaves across the width of the main facade has a Greek-influenced profile typical of the Federal style of the late-18<sup>th</sup>-early-19<sup>th</sup> century period, suggesting a possible Federal period date for the eastern addition. A simple corner-block doorframe could date to a remodeling of either the Federal or the Greek Revival period. The 6/9 sash and early-mid-19<sup>th</sup> century five-panel door give the front of the house a look of antiquity.

**East Elevation**

The east side of the house is composed of the one-and-a-half-story side gable of the front section and the one-story eastern facade of the rear ell (Photo # 5, Illustration # 2). On the gable end of the front portion of the house, just above the ground, is a high, brick-faced foundation pierced off-center by a wide, low opening (originally a low door?). At the first floor level are a pair of windows with 6/9 sash. In the half story, centered under the peak of the roof, is a single window with 2/2 sash.

The ell section on the east side is pierced by four asymmetrically-arranged openings (south to north: window-window-door-window). Ell windows on this side have 6/6 sash and the entrance has a four-panel door. These details suggest a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date for the ell addition. A chimney rises from the east side of the pitched ell roof.

**West Elevation**

The west side of the house is composed of the one-and-a-half-story side gable of the front section and the one-story western facade of the rear ell (Photos # 2, 3 & Illustration # 2). On the side gable of the front portion of the house a pair of first floor windows occupy the back section. Corresponding to the interior stairway, the front section of the gable end has no windows. At the half-story level of the gable portion is a pair of windows with 2/2 sash.

The ell is pierced by four asymmetrically-arranged openings (north to south: window-door-window-window). The windows have 6/6 sash and the entrance has a four-panel door, suggesting, as for the east side of the ell, that it is of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. Although the west facade of the ell is similar in appearance to the east facade, the two are not identical. Neither are the locations of the windows and doors arranged so that they stand opposite one another in the interior rooms.

**North Elevation**

The north-facing side of the main body of the house is seen as a single story, pierced near the center of the wall by a single window with 6/9 sash. Situated on the west side of this elevation is the north-facing, single-story, gable end of the rear ell. At its center is a single window with 6/6 sash.

**INTERIOR**

The interior of the Sawyer Homestead continues the theme of the exterior — austere functionality with few ornamental features. Nevertheless, interior features are stylistically distinctive enough so that a study of interior details clearly indicates that changes and remodelings have been made to the house over time. These features assist in piecing together a rough idea of the dates of the evolution of the house. However, further physical and documentary research is necessary to offer more precise dates for changes.

(continued)

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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA18<sup>th</sup>-Century Evidence

Certain elements of interior finish found in the original section of the house appear to survive from its original construction and are consonant with an 18<sup>th</sup> century date. These details include feather-edged wainscoat with a beaded edge, found in the former kitchen. This wainscoat is found in the entry hall, the northwest room of the main body of the house (Photo # 11), and in the stairway. All three of these areas were once part of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century kitchen. Also apparently original to the 18<sup>th</sup> century construction of the house is the post and beam casing with beaded edges that is seen in parts of the former kitchen and also in the parlor, and sitting room.

Entry Hall

The entry hall of the main body of the house has 18<sup>th</sup> century horizontal feather-edge wainscoat on its south and east walls and 18<sup>th</sup> century beaded cased posts and beams on those same walls, as has been mentioned above. Its north and west walls are sheathed with vertical board sheathing, and plank interior doors (Photos # 7, 8, 9, 10) that appear to date from the alteration of the south end of the kitchen that provided an entry hall and a stairway to the second level. These hand-planed, feather-edged features may date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Parlor

The eastern front room adjoining the entry hall is adorned with Federal style raised panel doors and moulded door frames that appear to date from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Photos # 10, 12). These details may suggest a Federal period date for the addition made to the east end of the front section of the house.

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Ell and Interior Remodeling

The existence of a number of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century four-panel interior doors, grain painting and Blake latches on doors in the ell is evidence of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date for the ell addition. Some of these same details found in the earlier portion of the house suggest that a general remodeling of the interior took place at the same time.

Second Floor

Interior evidence seen on the second floor interior at both gable ends of the main body of the house indicates that the roof was raised to provide a more ample half story with higher ceilings. Further physical and documentary research is necessary to establish a date for this alteration. A mixture of Federal and 20<sup>th</sup> century features found in the rooms of the second level make it difficult to understand the history of this section of the house.

Little Change During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Some plastering and other relatively superficial improvements may have been made during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but relatively few major changes seem to have been made to the house during the 1900's. The present arrangement of the rooms of the house is the same as shown in measured drawings of the first floor, second floor, and cellar (see Illustrations # 2, 3, 4) done in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by family member William Francis Sawyer as practice exercises for his training as an architect. Today, the house is wired for electricity and has running water, but, now as then, there is no indoor bathroom or privy.

(continued)

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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA**CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The property gradually fell into some decline following the death in 1959 of the father of the last occupant. Since the house and outbuilding have been unoccupied since 1989, they have further suffered from the cumulative effects of inadequate security, unchecked weathering, decay, leaking roofs, excessive plant growth, poor maintenance, and, in some areas of both the house and outbuilding, structural failure. Nonetheless, the house is still well intact, preserving most of its historic fabric in satisfactory condition. The outbuilding, containing the office, privy, and garage, is in a desperate state with its roof broken and walls listing outward.

**SUB-SURFACE FEATURES**

Generations of the Sawyer family have lived at this site since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Preliminary evidence suggests that trash pits representing this long period of occupation may be present. Although no archaeological study of the Sawyer Homestead has ever been undertaken, there is reason to believe that the implementation of such a study could prove fruitful.

**Archaeological Description**

While no prehistoric resources are recorded on the nominated property, it is possible that sites are present. Environmental characteristics of the property represent several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. The houselot is located on a well drained, level to moderately sloping land surface within 1000 feet of wetlands. The property is located within the Nashua/Merrimack River drainage. Wetlands near the property are limited to an isolated swampy area southwest of the house. Given the above information, known regional prehistoric settlement patterns, the small size of the parcel (approximately .33 acres) and historic development in the area, a low to moderate potential exists for recovering significant prehistoric resources on the property.

A high potential exists for recovering historic archaeological resources on the property. Additional historical research combined with archaeological survey and testing could identify evidence of occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) and structural remains from outbuildings that may exist in the area around the house. The extant outhouse and shed included in the nomination and remains of barn and sheds across the road from the nominated property may date to the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries indicating the potential for earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century structures in the area.

(end)

Sawyer Homestead

Name of Property

**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 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Worcester, MA

County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

LITERATURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1756-1950

**Significant Dates**

1756 ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION DATE

1806 BIRTH OF MARY SAWYER

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

MARY ELIZABETH SAWYER TYLER

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:



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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sawyer Homestead meets National Register Criteria A, B, and C. Under Criterion A it is historically significant at the local level for its association with several generations the Sawyer family over a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years or more. Under Criterion B it is significant at the national level for its association through a Sawyer family member, Mary Elizabeth Sawyer Tyler, for her role as the "Mary" of the well-known American nursery rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb". Under Criterion C the property is architecturally significant at the local level as an example of one version of the small, unadorned, one story farmhouses that were common in Central Massachusetts during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Furthermore, it is of interest as an altered example of the "Square Plan," often used during that period for small houses in this region. Additionally, the gradual expansion of the original "Square Plan" house over several generations by the Sawyer family reflects the changing expectations that rural New England families had of their dwellings during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The house is also important and rare in Sterling as an example of an 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century house that has had few alterations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If the supposed 1756 date of construction of the Sawyer Homestead is accurate, it is also among the oldest surviving dwellings in Sterling. Also of interest is the 1930 addition of a Federal Revival style garage to the existing privy/shop building. Added by the architect owner of the house, William F. Sawyer, this building reflects the historic-preservation-mindedness of the era as well as the thinking of a Sawyer family member who was quite conscious of the historic value of the family homestead. The construction of a garage disguised as a Federal period cart shed recalls the growing importance that the automobile was beginning to make on architecture during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its conflict with the nostalgia for the past that was characteristic of the same period.

**The Sawyer Family and the Sawyer Homestead**

The Sawyers of the Sawyer Homestead are direct descendants of Thomas Sawyer and his wife, Mary Prescott, some of the original 1647 settlers of Lancaster, Massachusetts. One of their children was the first child born in that town. Once a part of Lancaster, Sterling was incorporated as a separate municipality in 1781.

Current research suggests that the land upon which the Sawyer Homestead was built was part of a land grant given to Ezra Sawyer (b.1702) in 1724. It may be that as early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century there were as many as three contiguous Sawyer family farms ranged north-south along what is now Rugg Road. The Sawyer Homestead would have been the middle one of the three. By 1830 there were only two Sawyer-owned farms, the Sawyer Homestead, owned by Nathaniel Sawyer, and one south of it, owned by Samuel Sawyer. These two farms continued to be owned by Sawyer family members through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when portions of the land of both was subdivided for house lots. Further research is necessary to better understand the earliest history of the Sawyer land holdings in this area.

The Sawyer Homestead has always been owned by members of the Sawyer family, except for a period between about 1890 and about 1911. Although Sawyers still occupied the farm during that period, the property was legally transferred to members of the Butterick family, perhaps as part of a loan arrangement. The 1898 Worcester County atlas shows the farm as the property of Ebenezer Butterick. Tax records show that his daughter, Mary Ellen Butterick, was the owner during the early years of the century, through about 1911. Ebenezer Butterick is the same Butterick who made his wealth as a producer of dress patterns for home sewing.

(continued)

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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

It is believed that the house at Sawyer Homestead was built about 1756 by Ezra Sawyer, Jr. (1730-1776) on a farmstead taken from a corner of the farm of his father, Ezra Sawyer, Sr. (b.1702), mentioned above. The father's house, which is believed to have been located immediately north of it, may have stood on the approximate site of the present house at 26 Rugg Road. Ezra, Jr. died in Dorchester, Massachusetts while serving in the Revolutionary War. One of his sons, Thomas (1766-1825), acquired the homestead and raised eight children here with his wife, Elizabeth Houghton. One of their children was Mary Elizabeth Sawyer. She is the "Mary" made famous by the nursery rhyme and children's song "Mary Had a Little Lamb", by its publication in the popular school book, McGuffey's Second Reader, and by Thomas Edison's 1877 recitation of the rhyme as his first phonograph recording. Mary's brother, Nathaniel (1808-1888), was the owner of the property in 1830. During the 1850's the farm belonged to Ezra Sawyer (1827-1901), the son of Samuel Sawyer and the great-grandson of the original builder of the house, Ezra Sawyer, Jr. Ezra's brother, Henry S. Sawyer (1843-1918), a surveyor-draftsman-farmer was the owner from about 1870 through 1918. His wife Mary L. Sawyer continued to live here after his death. The next owner was William F. Sawyer (1888-1959), Henry's son, a practicing architect. The most recent occupant of the house was William's daughter, Eleanor (1914- ), who, following her father's death in 1959, lived here alone in the company of many cats until 1989. Although the house now stands vacant, it is still owned by Sawyer descendants.

The location of the Sawyer Homestead is in one of the two upland agricultural areas of Sterling that were the most intensely settled in the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century period the town was made up mostly of dispersed farmsteads, such as this. There were no houses built in the present town center until about 1760. By 1830 there were only a dozen dwellings standing in the center and most of the town's population was still living on isolated farmsteads like the Sawyer Homestead.

During its late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century ownership by Henry S. Sawyer, the Sawyer Homestead contained 57.18 acres and was known as "Oakhurst Farm. Illustrations # 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 show the house and the barn as they appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century period. During this period, Oakhurst Farm contained oak and walnut groves, woodland, brush and sprout land, over 14 acres of pasture, and some 17 acres that were suitable for plowing and growing crops (see plan, Illustration # 1).

### Mary Sawyer and "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

According to tradition, Mary Sawyer was the little girl who was followed to school by her pet lamb. The incident is believed to have occurred about 1817 at the one-room Redstone Hill School in Sterling. The schoolhouse, which stood about 6/10ths of a mile north of the Sawyer Homestead at the intersection of Rugg and Redstone Hill roads, was later moved from Sterling to Sudbury, Massachusetts. Since Rugg Road did not extend its present length in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mary, her brother, and the lamb would have walked through fields and pastures, rather than on a road, to reach the school from their house. Mary, herself, described the events that occurred after the lamb had followed her to school:

When the schoolhouse was reached the teacher had not arrived, and but few scholars were there. Then I began to think what I should do with the lamb while school was in session. I took her down to my seat -- you know we had old-fashioned, high boarded-up seats then. Well, I put the lamb under the seat, put on her blanket, and she lay down just as quietly as could be. By-and-by I had to go out to recite and left the lamb all right, but in a moment there was a clatter, clatter on the floor, and I knew it was the pattering of

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Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

the hoofs of my lamb. The teacher laughed outright, and, of course, all the children giggled. I took the lamb and put it in a shed until I was ready to go home.

Visiting the school that forenoon was a young man named John Roulstone, a nephew of the Rev. Lemuel Capen, who was then settled in Sterling, and with whom the young man was then preparing to enter Harvard College. Young Roulstone was very much pleased with the school incident, and the next day he rode across the fields on horseback, came to the little old schoolhouse, and handed me a slip of paper, which had written upon it three verses, which are the original lines, but since then there have been two [sic] verses added by a Mrs. Hale.

Despite the widespread belief that the "Mary" rhyme got its inspiration in Sterling, there exists a long-running debate about the truth of that attribution. Another contender for authorship of the poem is Sarah Josepha Hale (1788-1879), author of over twenty books and editor of the first American periodical for women, Godey's Lady's Book. She published a poem, entitled "Mary's Lamb", in her 1830 book Poems for Our Children. It contained not only the twelve lines said to have been composed by Roulstone but additional lines, as well. When confronted with questions about the originality of her poem, Mrs. Hale claimed adamantly to have been its original author. In 1878, a year before she died, Mrs. Hale instructed her son to write on her behalf: "every poem in this book was of her own composition. What can have given rise to the impression that some part of this particular poem was written by another person she does not know. There is no foundation for it whatever."

Anna E. Sawyer, who was a niece of Mary Sawyer and her nurse and companion in her final years, wrote in 1921:

So far as my aunt knew Mr Roulstone was the author of the poem, but she always said she had no proof of it. Being only a little girl she did not keep the paper upon which the twelve lines were written, and these lines were not separated into stanzas.

My aunt did not pay much attention to the claim of Mrs. Hale for she received the poem from Mr. Roulstone about 1814 [sic] and Mrs. Hale did not claim authorship until at least sixteen years later. Mrs. Hale may have added the last stanzas for the poem as published in the school readers contained at least twelve more lines than the one Mr. Roulstone gave my aunt. Had Mr. Roulstone not died so young undoubtedly the question of authorship would have been definitely settled.

No matter who the actual author was, Mary Sawyer (Mrs. Columbus Tyler) (Illustration # 5) popularized her claim to the tale in 1878 while raising funds to save Boston's venerable Old South Meeting House. To sell as a fundraiser, Mrs. Tyler made and autographed several hundred cards to each of which was pinned a piece of yarn she got by unraveling stockings that her mother, Betsy Sawyer, had made from the wool of her lamb (Illustration # 6). This philanthropic act created publicity for the tale of Mary and her lamb and irreversibly associated the rhyme with Mary Sawyer and with her native town of Sterling, Massachusetts. Richard Walden Hale, a nephew of Sarah Josepha Hale, wrote in Century Magazine in 1904 that he believed that Mrs. Tyler's story about the lamb's having inspired a poem was probably true, but that she had forgotten the exact verse that John Roulstone had written. His inference was that, having lost the original copy of the poem, Mrs. Tyler had substituted Mrs. Hale's poem in her mind for the one that had actually been written for her by

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Roulstone. He believed that his aunt had written the original poem, but that the autographed fundraising cards with the lamb's wool had confirmed (even though mistakenly) the truth of Mrs. Tyler's claim in the mind of the public. He saw what had happened as the making of myth rather than as the telling of a true tale, as was intended by Mary Sawyer Tyler.

In 1917 a Sawyer family member further contributed to the public acceptance of Mary Sawyer as the "Mary" of "Mary Had a Little Lamb". That year a small book entitled The True Story of Mary and Her Little Lamb was published by Elsie Eunice Sawyer, the daughter of a cousin of Mary Sawyer. In it she promoted not only Mary Sawyer herself, but also the Sawyer Homestead (called the "Birthplace of Little Mary") and the Redstone Hill schoolhouse where the event recounted in the rhyme had occurred. This book gave a rich history of the "true" story including early 19<sup>th</sup> century names, conversations, and descriptions of Sawyer farm, home, and school life. Her account was also backed by notarized affidavits by local persons testifying to the accuracy of the facts included in the book. This book was reissued in 1927. It was reprinted again in 1988 and is still available. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this book has been responsible for bringing history-minded tourists to Sterling and to the Sawyer Homestead. It ends with the following lines:

Little Mary...grew up to womanhood and became a true, noble woman, ever ministering to those around her....The latter part of her life was spent in Somerville, near Boston. Mrs. [Mary Sawyer] Tyler died December eleventh, eighteen hundred eighty-nine, and is buried in the famous Mount Auburn Cemetery, in Cambridge.

The home of her childhood still stands; and if you care to visit the interesting old town of Sterling, you will find the same little house, sheltered by many vines and overhanging branches of trees. For more information contact the Sterling Historical Society, where Mary Sawyer's wedding gown and other momentos [sic] may be viewed.

**Brief Biography of Mary Sawyer**

Mary Elizabeth Sawyer (1806-1889) grew up and lived with her family in the Sawyer Homestead, then operated as a farm. After completing her schooling in Sterling, she taught school for a while in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. In about 1832 she became an employee of the McLean Asylum for the Insane in what is now Somerville, Massachusetts. She later was made matron of the hospital and in 1835 married Columbus Tyler (died c.1879), the steward of the institution. The 1853 Annual Report of the hospital commented: "The economical affairs of the Asylum are most judiciously and faithfully managed by Mr. Tyler, and to him and Mrs. Tyler, the excellent Matron, we are indebted, in no small degree for the successful operation of the institution." The Tylers, who never had any children, retired from their work in 1862 and built a large Second Empire style house on Central Street on Spring Hill in Somerville. That house is no longer standing and its site is now a parking lot.

It was not until Mrs. Tyler's later years and her efforts to save Boston's Old South Church that she became known

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outside of Sterling for her part in the story of Mary and her lamb. It appears, also, that there was no real debate over the authorship of the poem until her Old South fundraising efforts called attention to her story, for it was at about that same time that Mrs. Hale made her statement claiming that the rhyme was entirely hers.

**Henry Ford and the Redstone Hill Schoolhouse**

In 1926 automobile manufacturer Henry Ford gave further support to the claim that Mary Sawyer's story was the true one. He bought the schoolhouse attended by Mary and her lamb, the Redstone Hill School in Sterling, and moved its frame to Sudbury, Massachusetts, where he reconstructed it as the first of several buildings he gathered there as part of his Wayside Inn complex (Illustrations 7 & 8). According to a 1927 article in the Boston Herald, the debate over the authorship of the rhyme had been settled to Mr. Ford's satisfaction. He chose to believe the story of Mary Sawyer but gave credit to Mrs. Hale for the latter verses of the rhyme:

Previous to the acquisition of the "Redstone" schoolhouse by Mr. Ford in 1926, his investigators made a thorough study of all the historical details connected [sic] with the famous nursery rhyme. The results of their extensive research were published in the Dearborn Independent in March, 1927, and settle the controversy with equal honor to Mrs. Hale and Mary Sawyer. One of the bronze memorial tablets placed on the school house at Mr. Ford's Wayside Inn property reads in part as follows:

*In honor of the children's classic  
"Mary Had a Little Lamb"  
and of  
Mary Elizabeth Sawyer -- 1806-1889  
The "Mary" of the poem  
Rebecca Kimball, the teacher  
John Roulstone, author of the first twelve lines  
Sarah Josepha Hale  
Whose genius completed the  
poem in its present form*

In 1928 Ford published a book defending his stand. It was entitled The Story of Mary and Her Little Lamb as Told by Mary and her Neighbors and Friends To which is added a Critical Analysis of the Poem.

**"Mary Had a Little Lamb" and Tourism in Sterling**

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with more and more families owning automobiles, tourism to historic sites across the country became widely popular. During this period, visitors came to Sterling from both near and far to see the sites associated with Mary and her lamb. These sightseers, who came to drive by the home of Mary and to view "Mary"

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memorabilia at the local historical society, became known locally as "lambies". The publication of Elsie Sawyer's True Story of Mary and Her Little Lamb (Illustration # 9) and Henry Ford's move of the Redstone Hill Schoolhouse to Sudbury and the publication of his "Mary and Her Little Lamb" book brought Sterling to the public eye as a tourist venue. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards sent home by visitors also helped attract others to make the pilgrimage to Sterling, the home of "Mary Had a Little Lamb". A postcard (Illustration # 9) showing a picturesque view of the Sawyer Homestead bears the caption "HOUSE WHERE MARY (SAWYER) AND THE LITTLE LAMB LIVED, STERLING, MASS." Another (Illustration # 10), showing both the house and the barn, is entitled "Birthplace of Mary and the Little Lamb, Sterling, Mass." In the 1960's a sculpture of a lamb was placed on Sterling Common to commemorate the story of Mary and her lamb. It too became a popular site for Sterling's "lambies" to visit. When the lamb sculpture was stolen in 1990, it was quickly replaced with a new one installed once again on the common in 1991 (Illustration # 14).

**The Architecture of the Sawyer Homestead**

An excellent example of the small, unadorned, one-and-a-half-story farmhouses that were common in Central Massachusetts during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Sawyer Homestead appears to be one of the least altered examples in Sterling of an 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling. Its one-and-a-half-story height, side-gable form, and modest size are representative of the dwellings occupied by large numbers of ordinary families in Worcester County during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as has been documented by Michael Steinitz' study of houses recorded in the 1798 Direct Tax Census. The preservation of a house such as this offers insight into the domestic setting in which everyday life was most typically lived in rural Massachusetts before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is of particular interest because small houses of this sort have survived far less frequently than have the larger dwellings of more affluent families built during the same period.

Major changes made to the house during the 19<sup>th</sup> century reflect the changes in expectations that were typical of the period in New England. The first major changes to the original "Square Plan" Sawyer Homestead may have been the addition to the east end of the original house and the raising of the roof to create a half-story second floor. These changes may have been made sometime in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period when many New England dwellings were being made larger due to the post-Revolutionary demand for a more refined life style and for greater personal privacy. During the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century period, New Englanders were building larger new houses and expanding older houses to provide more specialized living space, such as separate kitchens and individual bedchambers. Prior to this time it was not unusual for large families, in all but the wealthiest homes, to live in only two rooms. While small houses continued to be built and to be used by large families well into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, larger houses and more specialized living spaces were considered desirable by increasing numbers of New England families during this period.

Both the eastern addition and the raising of the roof would have expanded the existing living space of the Sawyer Homestead. However, the raising of the roof would have had a particularly notable influence on how life was lived in the house since it probably provided the family with a privacy of sleeping arrangements that it had never before enjoyed. Photo # 13 shows two of the upstairs rooms of the house as they appear today. Photo # 11 shows stairs to the second level possibly added at the same time.

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An important later addition to the Sawyer house further accomplished the popular 19<sup>th</sup> century goal of providing ordinary houses with more living space and specialized rooms. The addition of ells to New England houses was relatively rare before about 1800. Studies of New England farmhouses by Thomas C. Hubka have shown that before 1800 all major domestic rooms were typically contained within the main body of the house. He found that with the change in New England agriculture from subsistence farming to market farming, the construction of service ells became more common as an aid to more efficient, larger scale agricultural processing. By 1800 many wealthy New England farmers had moved their kitchens to attached ells. Many other farmers, wealthy or not, continued to build their kitchens as an integral part of the main body of the house until the advent of the cook stove during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As a result of a strong movement in New England toward improved farming techniques, the period between about 1820 and 1860 was one of intense rural remodeling and of the expansion in New England farmhouses. The addition of the rear ell at the Sawyer Homestead seems to have been a reflection of this period of regional rural improvement. The new ell would have provided not only a kitchen (probably with a modern cookstove) separated from other activities of family life, but also storage space and workspace for farm production activities. Because little is presently known about the farming carried on during the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Sawyer Homestead, it is impossible to say with any precision how the specific needs or production of the farm itself might have affected the construction of the ell.

Architectural features, such as four-panel doors and 6/6 window sash found in the present one-story rear ell suggest that the ell was added to the Sawyer Homestead during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Other mid-19<sup>th</sup> century features, including grain painting and Blake latches on interior doors of the main body of the house, and corner blocks on the simple door frame at the main entrance are indications that general renovations and redecorating probably also accompanied the construction of the ell. The existence of Blake latches on doors throughout the ell and the redecorated sections of the main body of the house suggests a post-1840 date for this addition and remodeling.

Further physical and documentary research is necessary to confirm the presumed dates of the above-described scenario. Further research could also provide more detailed information about the changes made to the house that will allow a better understanding of the lives of the Sawyers at different periods of their occupancy of the house.

**William Francis Sawyer, the Sawyer Homestead and the Colonial Revival Style**

William Francis Sawyer, owner of the Sawyer Homestead during the early-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century period, was the brother of Elsie Eunice Sawyer, the author of the previously-mentioned book, *The True Story of Mary and Her Little Lamb*. They both grew up in this house with two brothers, Arthur and Ezra, a sister, Mabel, and their parents, Henry S. and Mary (Burpee) Sawyer. Their grandfather, Samuel Sawyer (b.1800), was a first cousin to Mary Sawyer. Samuel's father, Ezra, and Mary's father, Thomas, were brothers. William Sawyer first studied agriculture, completing his degree in 1908. He later studied architecture and became a registered architect, working in the offices of the architectural firm, Frost, Chamberlain and Edwards, and at the end of his life for Franklyn R. Williams, Inc. in the nearby city of Worcester.

Architectural drawings, drafting implements, and reference works found in the outbuilding at Sawyer Homestead suggest that he kept his architect's office there at one time. Drawings and papers in the office indicate that he preferred the Colonial Revival style of architecture and was involved in preservation and restoration work. Among his papers were also found measured drawings of the Sawyer Homestead house and barn. They include not only floor plans (Illustrations

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# 2, 3 & 4) but also elevations of all the exterior facades and some interior elevations and details. Measured drawings of the now missing barn (the supposed place of birth of Mary's lamb) include Illustration # 15, which shows the main facade of the barn, elevations of the other three facades, and plans of the ground and first floors, as well.

During his ownership of the Sawyer Homestead, William Sawyer apparently saw to its preservation and was responsible for the addition about 1931 of the Federal Revival style garage (Illustration # 16). He is believed to have supplied the existing outbuilding (called a shop in earlier tax records) with features such as a Colonial Revival style closet, Colonial Revival style privy, and handwrought ironwork. A report written in 1998 by architectural consultant, John Goff, indicates that drawings found in the office show "that Sawyer was responsible for architecturally remodeling the Sawyer House in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in a sympathetic Colonial Revival Style...." Goff also believes that Sawyer was responsible for the construction of outbuildings (now collapsing, see Photo # 6) near the site of the former barn on the opposite side of the road from the house:

From William F. Sawyer's known works and surviving personal effects (including architectural textbooks recently located), it appears he took a special interest in designing vertical-board 18<sup>th</sup> century style partitions, designing 18<sup>th</sup> century style wood batten doors, installing "Colonial" style recycled or replica wrought iron hardware, as well as designing practical farm outbuildings. From the combination of these interests, he is additionally credited with designing and constructing the two Colonial Revival (with olde style batten doors) farm buildings which now barely survive across Rugg Road, south of the [site of the] old Farm Barn.

Further physical investigation and documentary research is necessary to confirm or deny this suggestion. Doubt is cast upon Goff's suggestion that Sawyer remodeled the house and designed the outbuildings since Sawyer's own early 20<sup>th</sup> century plans, apparently done before he had completed his architectural training, show the house unchanged from its present configuration. A 1907 plan of the farm (Illustration # 1) shows the outbuildings already in place. However, if Sawyer were proven to have been responsible for any such work on the house or the barn outbuildings, the presence of his hand would increase their historical interest and significance.

William F. Sawyer was not alone in his interest in preserving historic buildings and in reproducing new buildings in the forms and with the details found in early American architecture. A strong interest in early American architecture existed in this country all during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Colonial Revival style favored by Sawyer first became popular in the United States after the 1876 Centennial Exposition was held in Philadelphia to honor the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the American republic. Exhibited at that exposition were buildings inspired by historic early American examples. Excited both by the patriotism and the nostalgia represented in these buildings, Americans adopted the Colonial Revival style wholeheartedly. From about 1880 through the 1940's this style was widely popular across the United States. It was used not only for dwellings but also for institutional and public buildings. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most examples of the style were not intended to replicate actual historic buildings. Rather, they often incorporated Classical features and details found on buildings of the Colonial and Federal periods with features of the popular Queen Anne style.

The Colonial Revival style of William Sawyer's day was shaped by slightly different influences. During the early 20<sup>th</sup>

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century the style became less freewheeling and more influenced by the designs of actual historic buildings. This greater concern with historical accuracy coincided with the realization that much of the country's early architecture was fast being lost. During the 1920's, publications, such as the White Pine periodical series, included actual measured drawings of Colonial and Federal period buildings and their detailing. Such publications made it easier for designers to see how early American buildings actually looked and encouraged a more historically accurate brand of the Colonial Revival.

In Sawyer's day the Colonial Revival style of architecture was only one part of a much broader interest in the country's past. The same interests in early architecture that created the Colonial Revival style also brought about a greater public reverence for the American past and an awareness of the need for historic preservation. Several events worked together to promote an increased public interest in American history, scholarship in the field of historical architecture, historically-inspired architecture, and historic preservation.

The following listing of events gives an idea of the spirit of the times, the setting for the Colonial Revival style interests of William Sawyer, and the milieu in which the "Mary's Lamb" legend was embraced by automobile tourism. In 1904 the United States government took an important first step toward the responsible guardianship of historic properties under its jurisdiction with a survey of antiquities on Federal lands. This effort resulted in the Antiquities Act of 1906, which provided for their protection. In 1910, shortly after a successful effort to save Boston's historic Paul Revere House from demolition, William Sumner Appleton established the first regional historic preservation organization in the United States, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The first American open-air historical museums got their starts in the 1920's. In 1926 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. undertook the in-situ restoration of the 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings of colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, creating an outdoor museum in an actual lived-in community. Automobile manufacturer, Henry Ford, created a complex of historic restorations around the Wayside Inn, in Sudbury, Massachusetts, which had been made famous by the poet Longfellow. As has been mentioned, he moved the Redstone Hill Schoolhouse there from Sterling in 1927. He later added a grist mill and a chapel to the group. In 1928 Ford continued his interest along these lines when he began work on a much larger outdoor museum, Greenfield Village, in Dearborn, Michigan, where he moved historic buildings to create a village setting. In 1933, the first major on-going effort to record important examples of American architecture got underway when the Historic American Buildings Survey was established by the United States government under the auspices of the National Park Service.

These well-publicized documentation, preservation, and education efforts led to an increasing interest in and knowledge of actual examples of early American buildings, not only by scholars and architects, but also by the general public. These efforts helped to promote historic tourism and encouraged the popularity of a more "historically correct" version of the Colonial Revival style. This trend was especially strong during the 1920's and 1930's when William Sawyer added the garage to the Sawyer Homestead and when "Mary's Lamb" tourism in Sterling was at a high point.

**Archaeological Significance**

Since patterns of prehistoric occupation in Sterling are poorly understood, any surviving sites in the nominated area could be significant. Prehistoric sites in the area can be significant by contributing information relating to Native American subsistence and settlement patterns in the Central Massachusetts/Worcester Plateau uplands and the interior zone of the

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Nashua River drainage. Potential prehistoric sites on the nominated property may be limited to smaller, short-term campsites with a focus on upland resources and secondary wetlands. These sites may contain important information that associates them on a functional, seasonal and temporal basis with larger habitation sites located near major ponds, lakes, rivers and brooks.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to document the evolution of a family farm over three centuries in the Central Massachusetts uplands. Structural remains from outbuildings on the property can help document the layout of the farm over time, possibly identifying changes in the types of agricultural production. Information may also be present identifying functional changes in structures or adaptive reuse as residency, possibly for recreation, became more important than agriculture. Detailed analysis of the contents of occupational related features can also be important in documenting the life of the Sawyer family who occupied the farm from the 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Information from occupational related features can potentially contribute information on specific periods of occupation at the farm and by extrapolation different periods of life in the town and region. Archaeological resources can potentially contribute information that describes three centuries of social, cultural and economic change on a small Central Massachusetts farm.

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Sawyer Family Archives, property of Lori Barr & Diane Melone.

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**Photographs**

Sawyer Homestead photographs, Collection Diane Melone, Sterling.

**Interviews**

- S. Ceccacci with Somerville Historical Commission, Somerville, Massachusetts, November 19, 1999, regarding the "no-longer-standing" status of the Columbus Tyler house in Somerville.
- S. Ceccacci with Diane Melone, Sterling, October 1999.

(end)

Sawyer Homestead  
Name of Property

Worcester MA  
County, State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 33 acres

### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

x 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 Susan McD. Ceccacci, and David Gibbs with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2000

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Diane Melone and Lori E. Barr

street & number 4 Kendall Road telephone 978-422-6442

city or town Sterling state MA zip code 01564

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The area included in the Sawyer Homestead nomination includes the house lot shown on Town of Sterling Assessor's Map 11, Lot 8A. Also included is a lot (Map 11, Lot 30) across Rugg Road from the house lot. This lot is a portion of a single parcel described by the Sterling Assessor as consisting of two lots (Map 11, Lot 30 and Map 11, Lot 34). Lot 34 of this parcel is not part of the nomination.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The lot included with the house, Map 11, Lot 8A, is a portion of the much larger original acreage of the Sawyer farm. The lot across Rugg Road from the house, Map 11, Lot 30, was historically part of the Sawyer farm and was the site of its barn and related agricultural outbuildings.

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## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

## UTM REFERENCES

|               |                   |                     |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. 19<br>Zone | 274780<br>Easting | 4701900<br>Northing |
| 2. 19<br>Zone | 274860<br>Easting | 4701880<br>Northing |
| 3. 19<br>Zone | 274900<br>Easting | 4701760<br>Northing |
| 4. 19<br>Zone | 275350<br>Easting | 4701980<br>Northing |
| 5. 19<br>Zone | 275280<br>Easting | 4700080<br>Northing |
| 6. 19<br>Zone | 275960<br>Easting | 4701240<br>Northing |
| 7. 19<br>Zone | 275940<br>Easting | 4701990<br>Northing |
| 8. 19<br>Zone | 275860<br>Easting | 4701970<br>Northing |
| 9. 19<br>Zone | 275840<br>Easting | 4701940<br>Northing |

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number illus. Page 1

Sawyer Homestead  
Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

**ILLUSTRATION #1** 1907 plan showing the extent of the farm of the Sawyer Homestead. The house and outbuilding are seen here before construction of the garage. The barn is seen east of the intersection of Maple Street and Rugg Road with its full complement of outbuildings. (Worcester County Registry of Deeds)

**ILLUSTRATION #2** First floor plan of the house at Sawyer Homestead. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century measured drawing done by William F. Sawyer, done as an exercise as part of his architectural training. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #3** Second floor plan of the house at Sawyer Homestead. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century measured drawing by William F. Sawyer, done as an exercise as part of his architectural training. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #4** Cellar plan of the house at Sawyer Homestead. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century measured drawing by William F. Sawyer, done as an exercise as part of his architectural training. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #5** Portrait photograph of Mary Sawyer Tyler (Mrs. Columbus Tyler) taken in later years.

**ILLUSTRATION #6** Photocopy of a photograph of one of the cards made and autographed by Mary Sawyer Tyler to sell as a fundraiser in the effort to save Old South Meeting House in Boston from demolition. At the center of the card is a strand of yarn made from wool from the first shearing of "Mary's Little Lamb."

**ILLUSTRATION #7** Redstone Hill Schoolhouse attended by Mary Sawyer and her lamb after its move from Sterling and 1927 reconstruction by Henry Ford at the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Massachusetts. (Photo, collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #8** Interior of reconstructed Redstone Hill Schoolhouse, Sudbury, Massachusetts. (Photo, collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #9** Early 20<sup>th</sup> century encouragements to "Mary had a Little Lamb" tourism. Left: cover of Elsie Eunice Sawyer's 1917 book. Right: early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard showing Sawyer Homestead as home of Mary and the lamb.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number illus. Page 2Sawyer Homestead  
Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

**ILLUSTRATION #10** Enlarged postcard photograph showing the Sawyer Homestead with house and barn after 1918. View taken from lot south of the house. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #11** Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph of main and west facades of house at Sawyer Homestead. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #12** Sawyer Homestead (above) and barn (below), early mid-20<sup>th</sup> century photographs (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #13** Sawyer Homestead barn about turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #14** Photograph of 1991 lamb sculpture on Sterling Common (Associated Press photo)

**ILLUSTRATION #15** Sawyer Homestead barn, main façade, measured drawing by William F. Sawyer, early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #16** Plan and elevation of garage attached to existing outbuilding at Sawyer Homestead, part of a larger sheet of drawings made in 1931 by William F. Sawyer, architect, 25 Lancaster Street, Worcester. (Collection Diane Melone)

**ILLUSTRATION #17** Hypothetical original plan (drawn by Susan Ceccacci)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs 1-5 taken by David Gibbs, April 1998

1. Façade (south facing)
2. Façade (west side)
3. Outbuilding (west side)
4. Façade (from southeast)
5. East side

Photographs 6-13 taken by Susan Ceccacci, November 1999  
Negatives in possession of Diane Melone

6. Collapsing outbuildings on former barn lot, looking E from Rugg Road
7. Interior, entrance hall, looking W at paneled wall and door to stairs to 2<sup>nd</sup> level
8. Interior, entrance hall, SW corner with horizontal moulded wainscoat on S wall and door to 2<sup>nd</sup> level on W wall.
9. Interior, entrance hall, looking east into SE front room



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

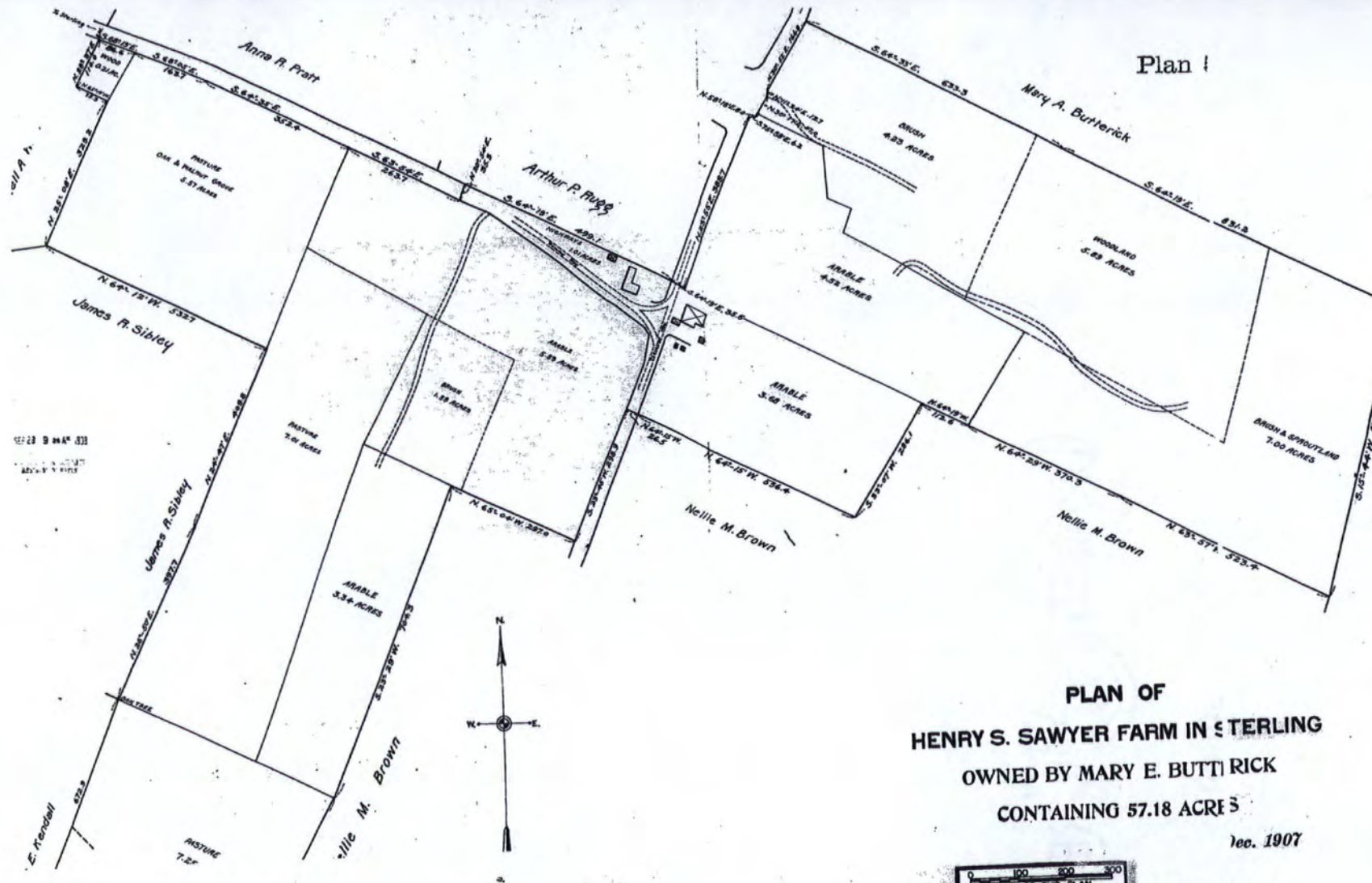
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number illus. Page 3

Sawyer Homestead  
Sterling (Worcester Co.), MA

- 
- 10. Interior, NW room, looking into ell
  - 11. Interior, SW front room looking W into entry hall and stairway to second level
  - 12. Interior, SW front room N wall looking NE
  - 13. Interior, 2<sup>nd</sup> level, front rooms looking E

(end)



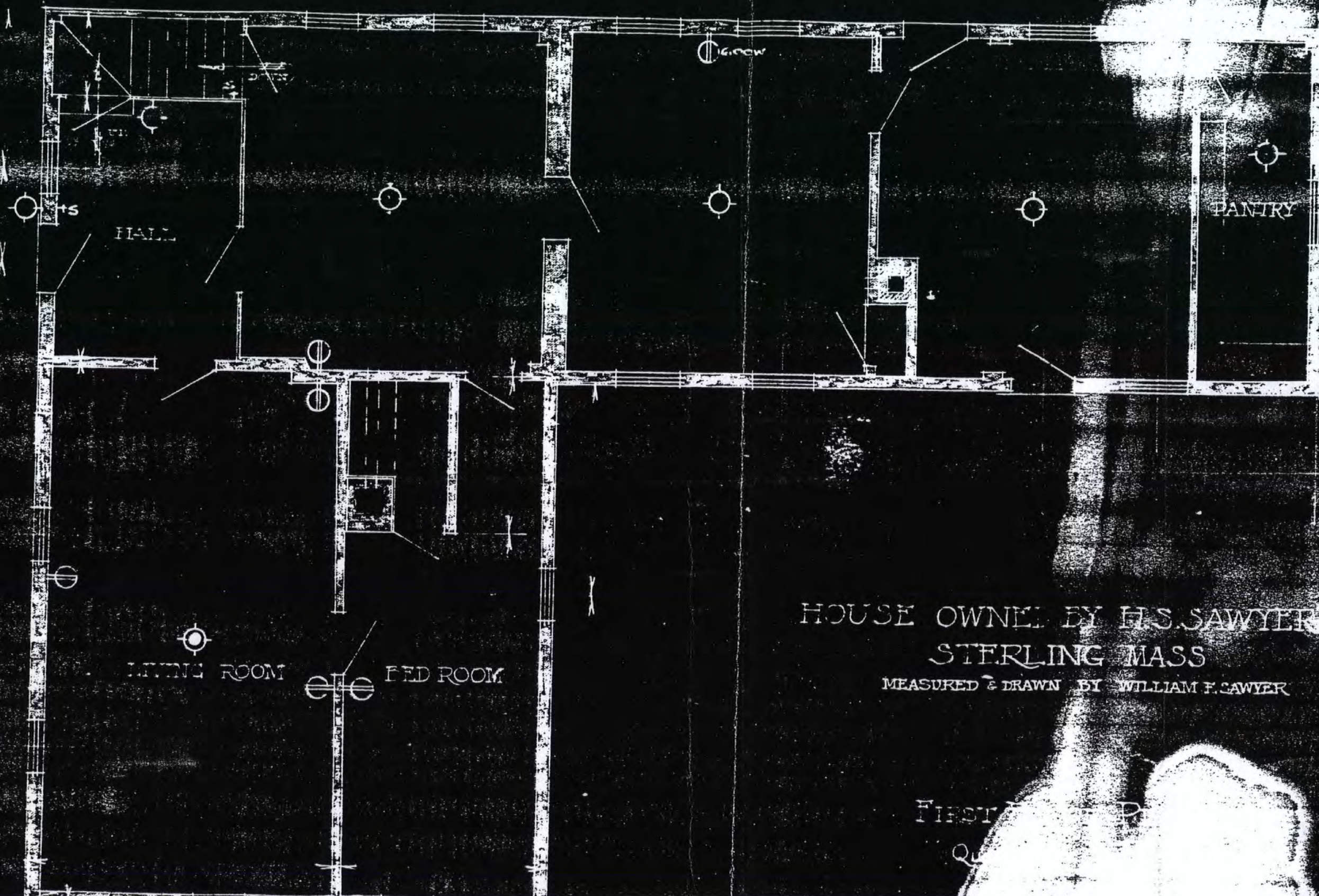
## ILLUSTRATION # 1

1907 plan showing the extent of the farm of the Sawyer Homestead. The house and outbuilding are seen here before construction of the garage. The barn is seen east of the intersection of Maple Street and Rugg Road with its full complement of outbuildings. (Worcester County Registry of Deeds)



ILLUSTRATION #2

PLAN, FIRST FLOOR, SAWYER HOMESTEAD, HOUSE, MEASURED DRAWING, WILLIAM F. SAWYER, EARLY 20TH CENTURY  
(COLLECTION DIANE MELONE)



HOUSE OWNED BY H.S. SAWYER  
STERLING MASS

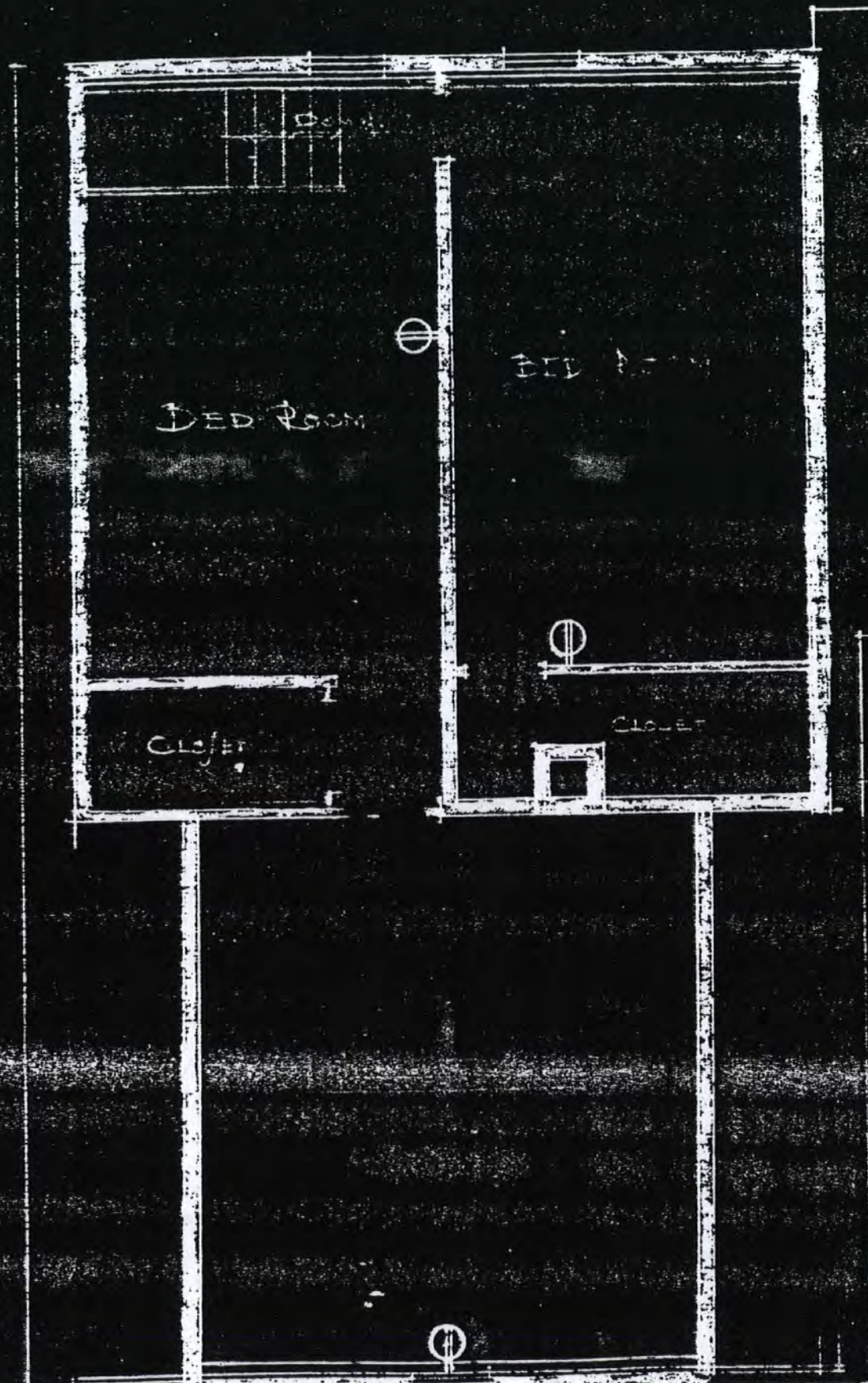
MEASURED & DRAWN BY WILLIAM F. SAWYER

FIRST FLOOR



ILLUSTRATION # 3

PLAN, SECOND FLOOR, SAWYER HOMESTEAD, HOUSE, MEASURED DRAWING, WILLIAM F. SAWYER, EARLY 20TH CENTURY  
(COLLECTION DIANE MELONE)



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Quarter Inch Scale

HOUSE OWNED BY H. S. SAWYER

STERLING MASS

MEASURED & DRAWN BY WILLIAM F. SAWYER





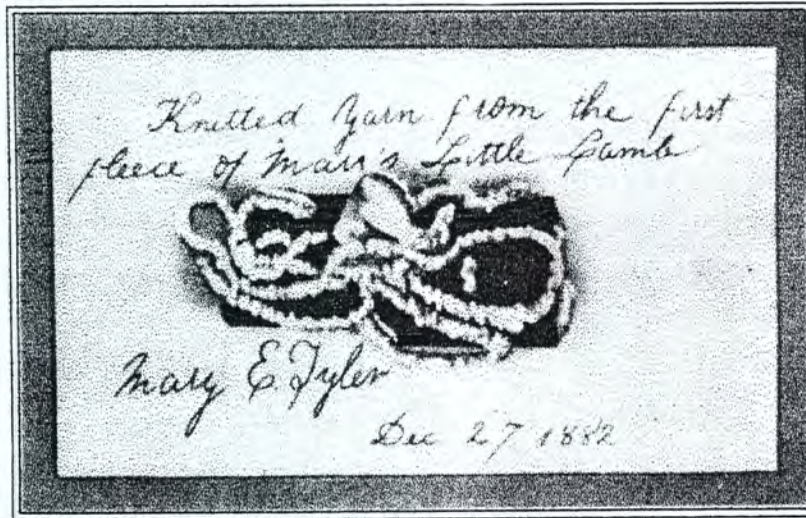




MARY SAWYER TYLER

**ILLUSTRATION # 5** Portrait photograph of Mary Sawyer Tyler (Mrs. Columbus Tyler) taken in her later years.



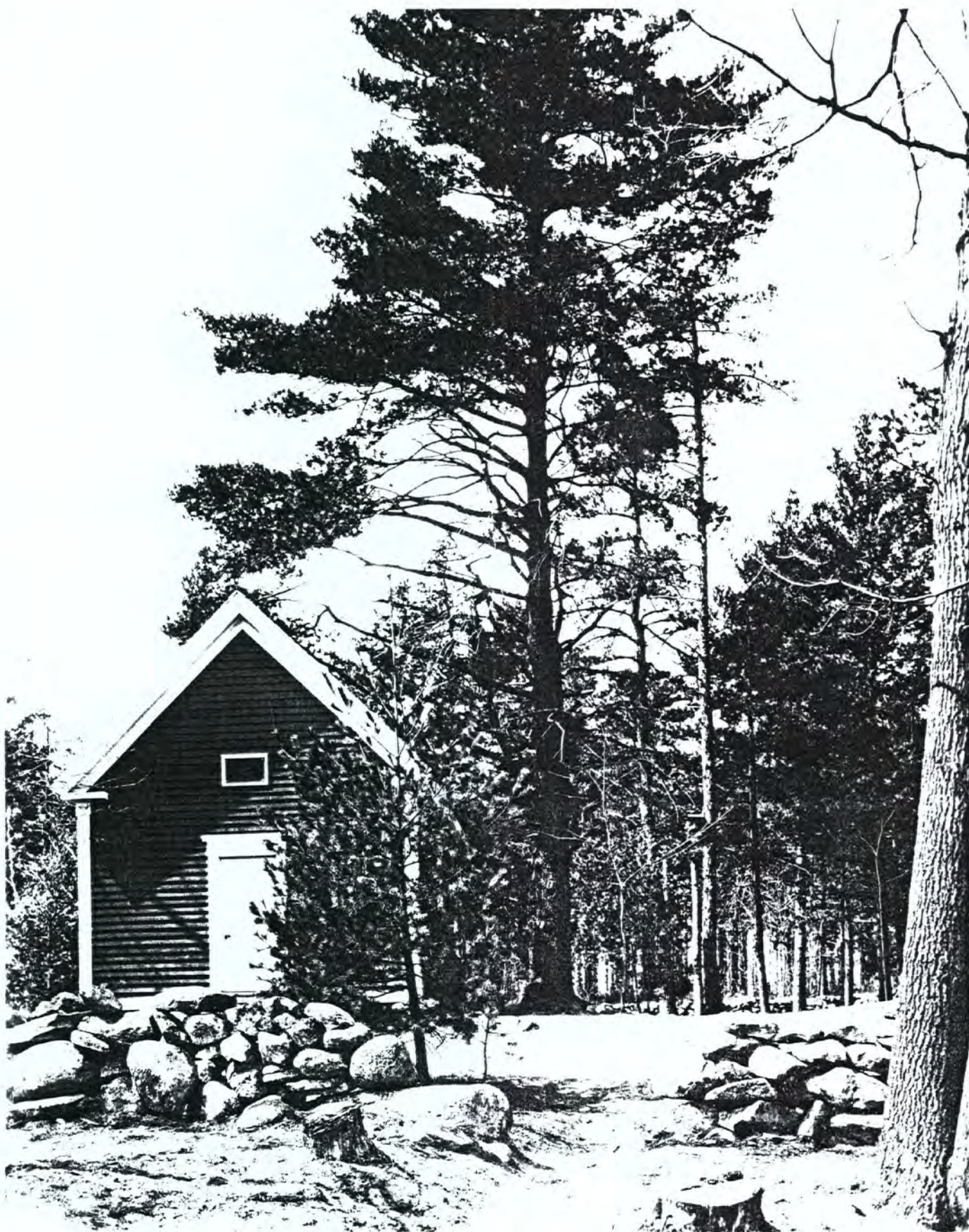


*Photo of Mary's autograph and a piece of the knitted yarn from the first fleece of Mary's Little Lamb.*

## ILLUSTRATION # 6

Photocopy of a photograph of one of the cards made and autographed by Mary Sawyer Tyler to sell as a fundraiser in the effort to save Old South Meeting House in Boston from demolition. At the center of the card is a strand of yarn made from wool from the first shearing of Mary's "Little Lamb".





### ILLUSTRATION # 7

Redstone Hill Schoolhouse attended by Mary Sawyer and her lamb after its move from Sterling and 1927 reconstruction by Henry Ford at the Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Massachusetts. (Photograph, Collection Diane Melone)



**ILLUSTRATION # 8** Interior of reconstructed Redstone Hill Schoolhouse, Sudbury, Massachusetts. (Photograph, Collection Diane Melone)

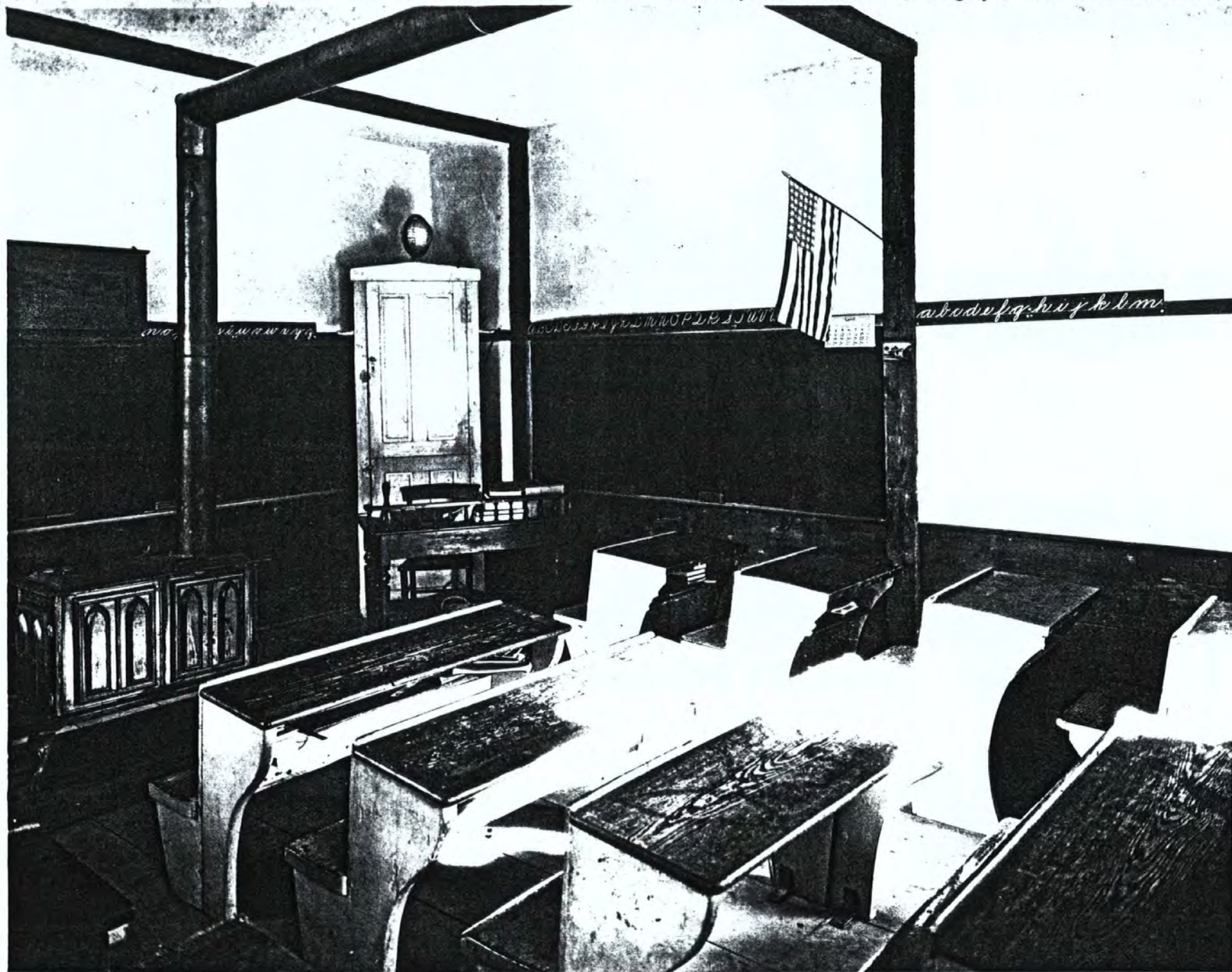




ILLUSTRATION # 9

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century encouragements to "Mary Had a Little Lamb" tourism.

Left: Cover of Elsie Eunice Sawyer's 1917 book. Right: Early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard showing Sawyer Homestead as home of Mary and the lamb.

# THE TRUE STORY OF MARY AND HER LITTLE LAMB



AS RETOLD BY  
ELSIE EUNICE SAWYER  
ILLUSTRATED  




HOUSE WHERE MARY (SAWYER) AND THE LITTLE LAMB LIVED  
STERLING, MASS.





**ILLUSTRATION # 10** Enlarged postcard photograph showing the Sawyer Homestead with house and barn after 1918. View taken from lot south of the house. (Collection Diane Melone)



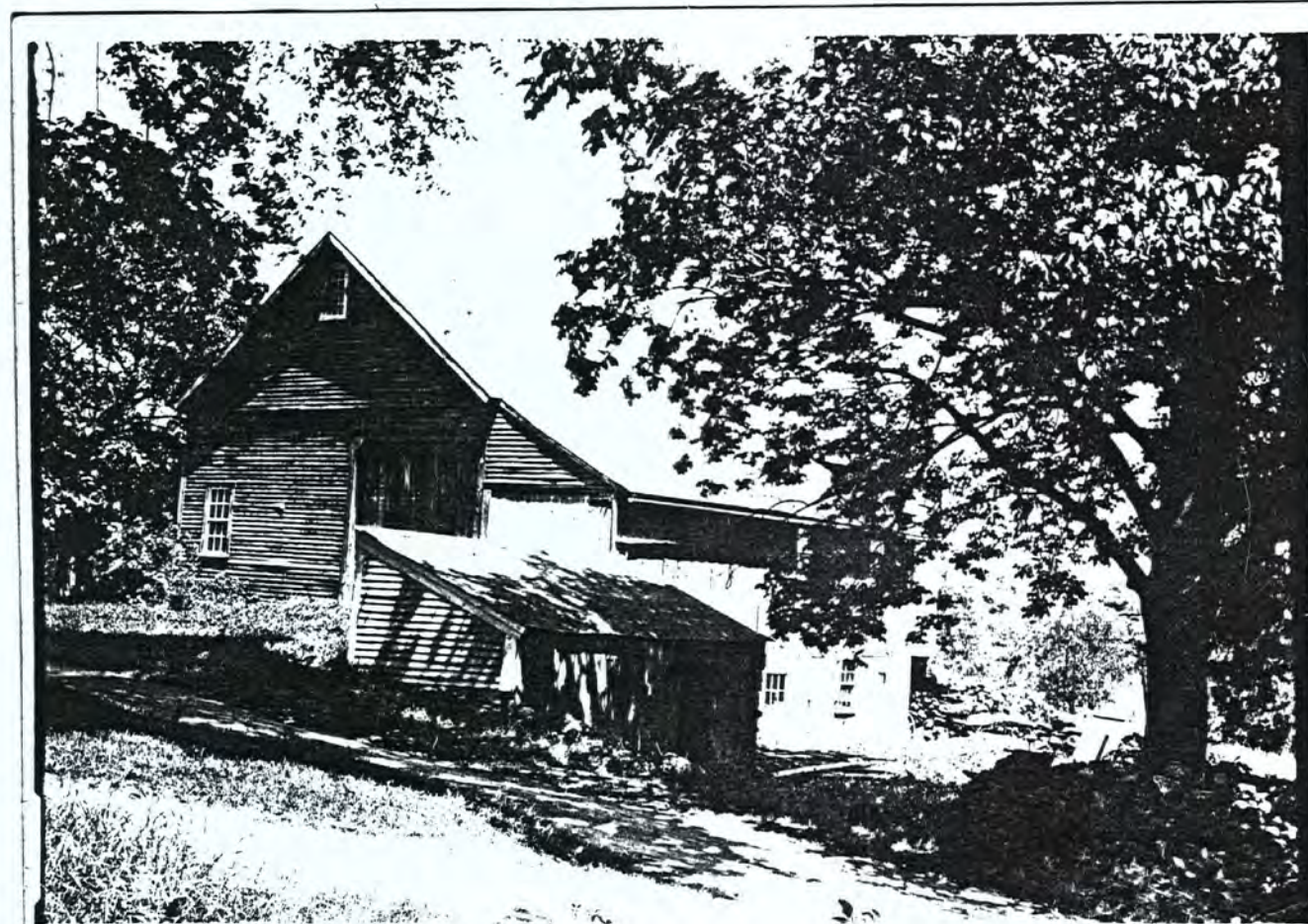


**ILLUSTRATION # 11** Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph of main and west facades of house at Sawyer Homestead. (Collection Diane Melone)



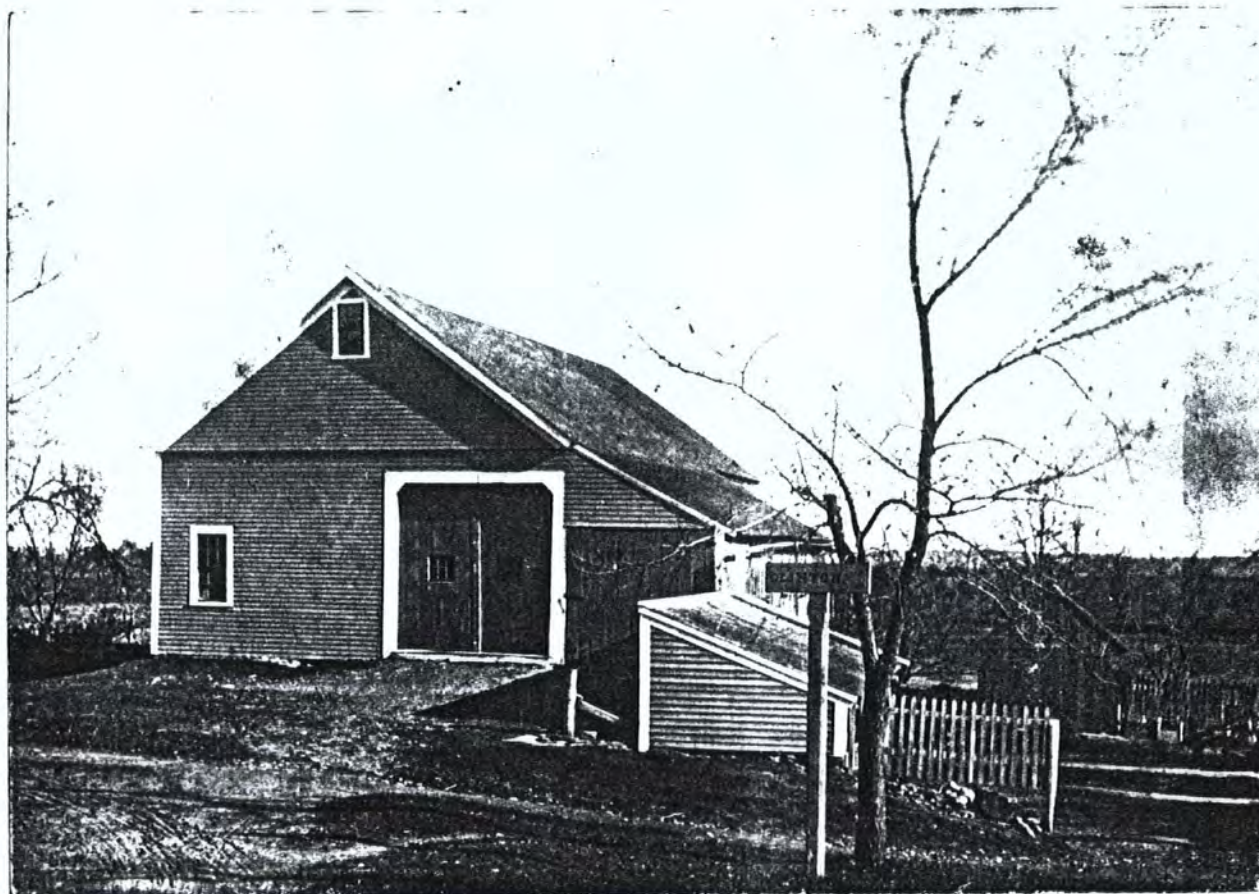


**ILLUSTRATION # 12** Sawyer Homestead house (above) and barn (below), early-mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century photographs.  
(Collection Diane Melone)





**ILLUSTRATION # 13** Sawyer Homestead Barn about turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Collection Diane Melone)



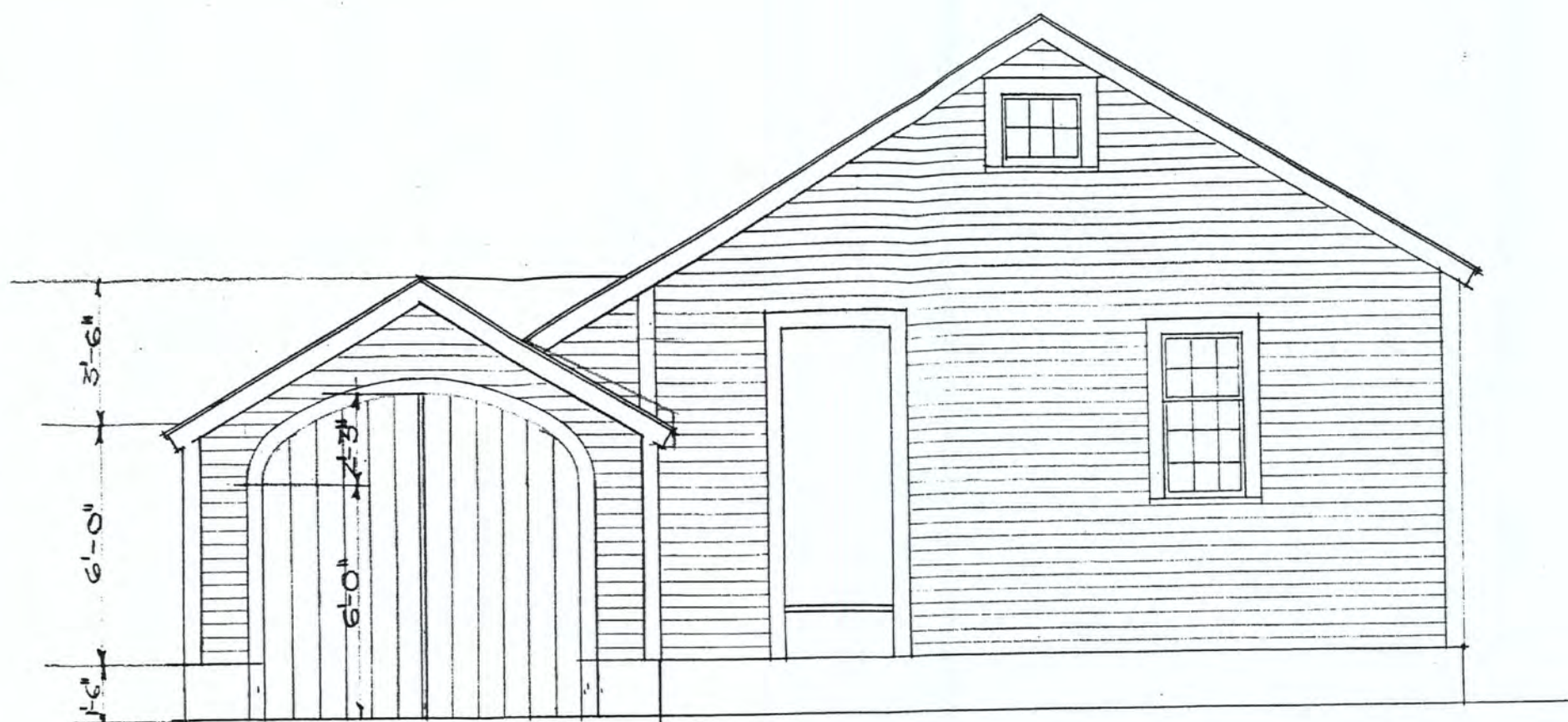




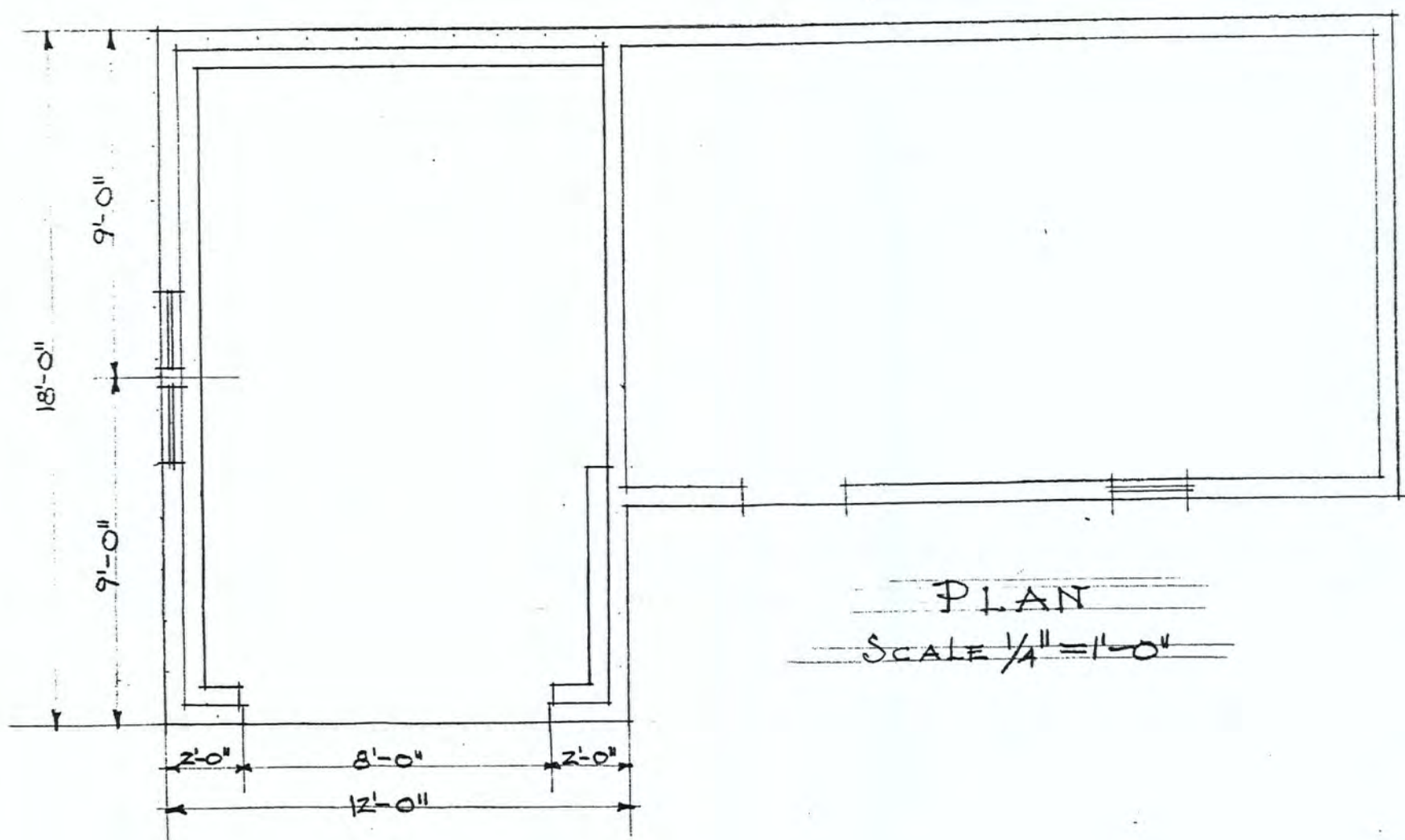
#### **ILLUSTRATION # 14**

Photograph of 1991 lamb sculpture on Sterling Common (Associated Press photo)





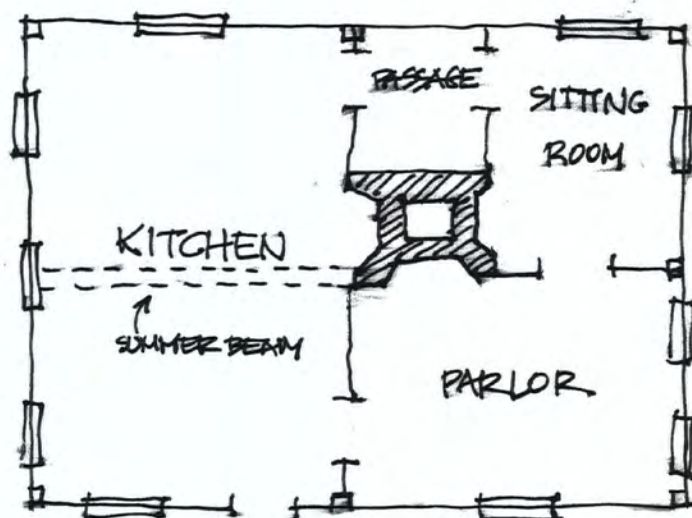
FRONT ELEVATION



PLAN  
SCALE  $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0"$

ILLUSTRATION # 16

PLAN & ELEVATION OF GARAGE ATTACHED TO EXISTING OUTBUILDING AT SKUYER HOMESTEAD, PART OF LARGER SHEET OF DRAWINGS FOR THE GARAGE MADE IN 1931 BY WILLIAM F. SKUYER, ARCHITECT, 25 LANCASTER STREET, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS. (COLLECTION DIANE MELONE)



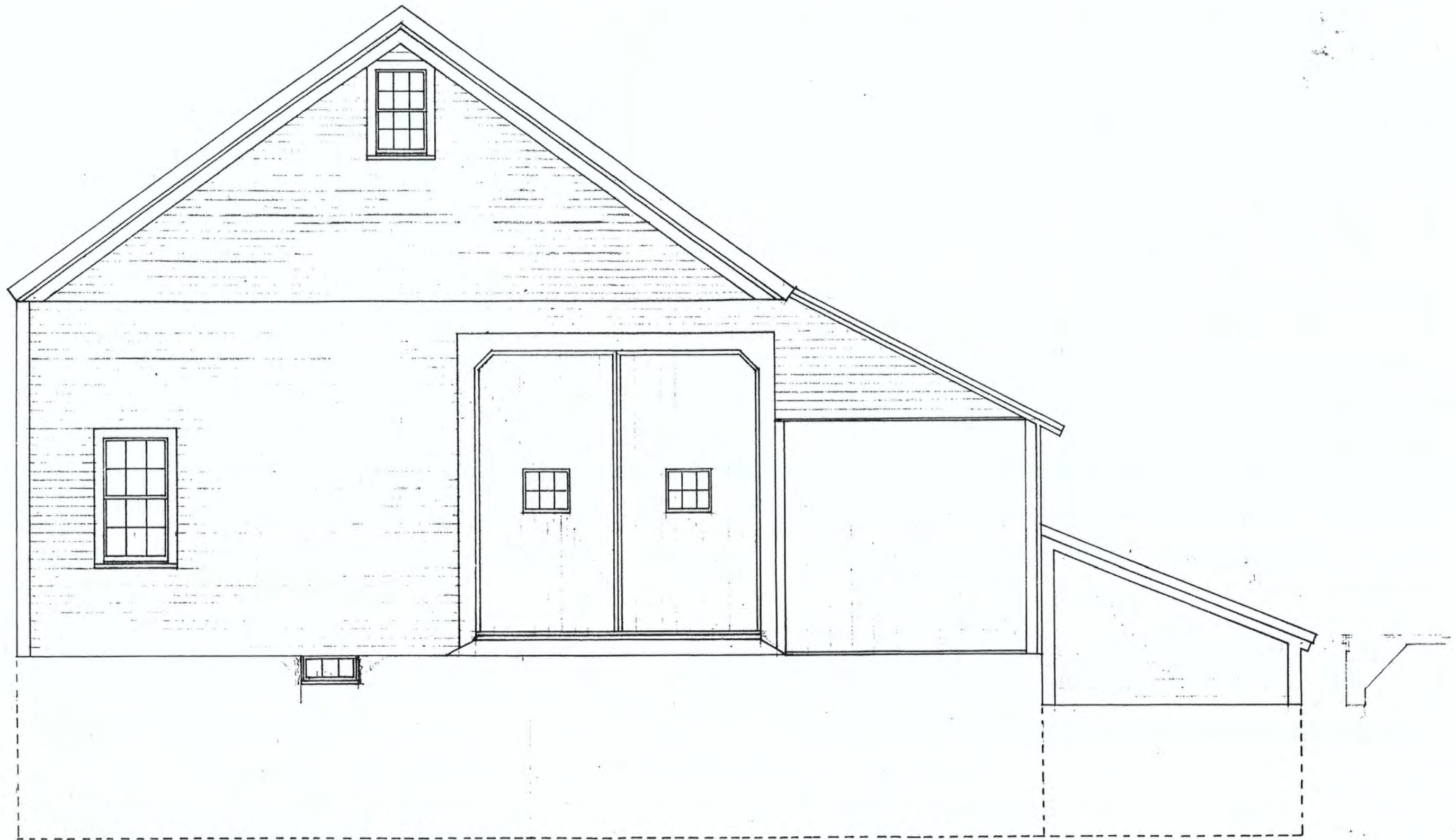
HYPOTHETICAL ORIGINAL PLAN

SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING, MASSACHUSETTS

(NOT TO SCALE)

ILLUSTRATION # 17





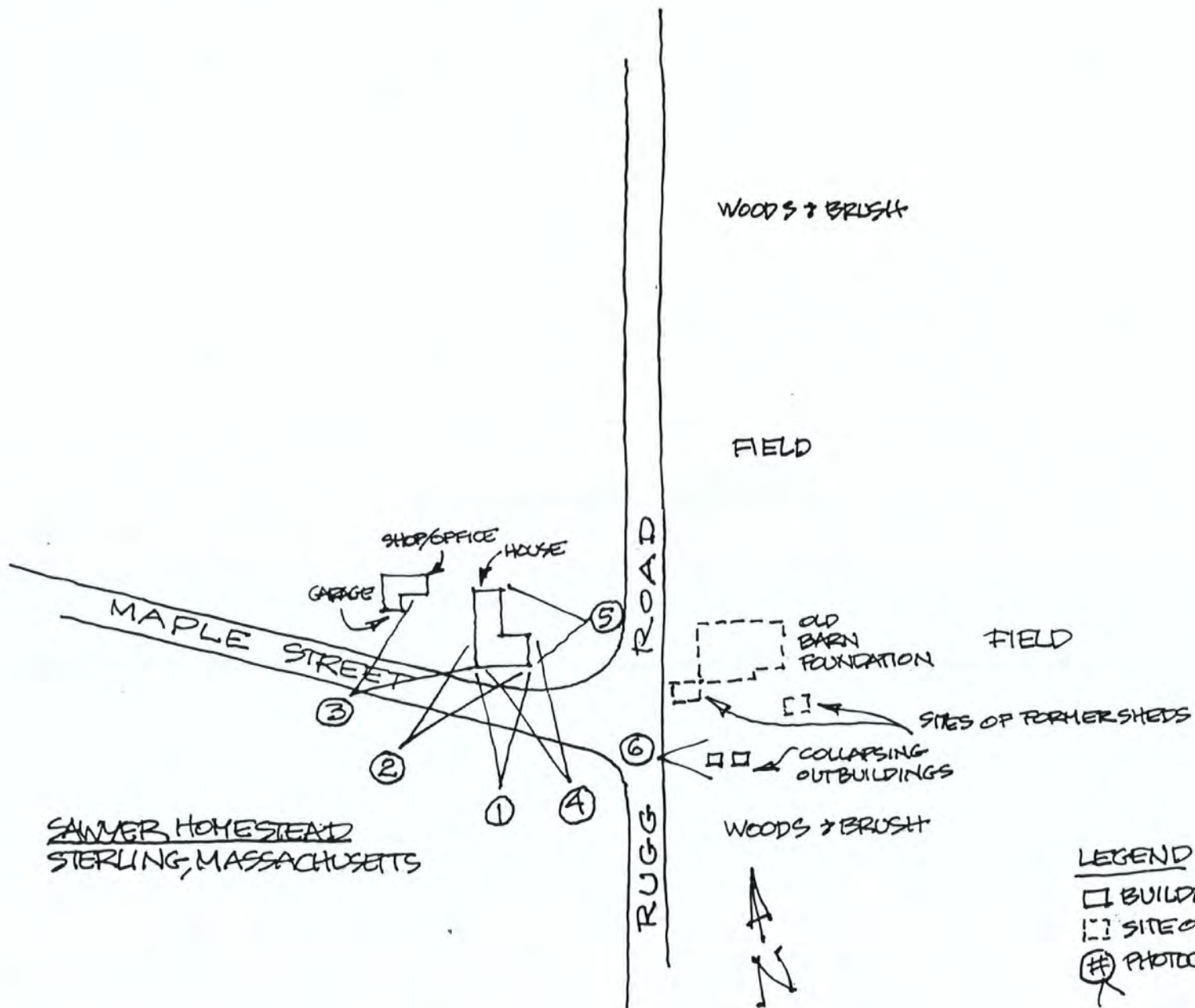
WEST ELEVATION  
SCALE  $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0"$

ILLUSTRATION #15

SAWYER HOMESTEAD BARN, MAIN FACADE, MEASURED DRAWING BY  
WILLIAM F. SAWYER, EARLY 20TH CENTURY (COLLECTION DIANE MELONE)

FARM BARN OF HENRY S. SAWYER  
STERLING MASS

MEASURED AND DRAWN BY W.F. SAWYER



# LEGEND

- [ ] BUILDING
- [ ] SITE OF FORMER BUILDING
- (#) PHOTOGRAPH # & DIRECTION



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Sawyer Homestead  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 7/31/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/14/00  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/30/00 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/14/00  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00001036

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ ACCEPT \_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA accept A, B, C

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 9/13/00

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





Sawyer Homestead  
108 Maple St.  
Sterling MA

David W. Gibbs 4-6-98  
Negative #17  
1 of 5  
Facade (South facing)





Sawyer Homestead  
108 Maple St.  
Sterling MA

David W. Gibbs 4-6-98  
Negative #19  
2 of 5  
Facade/West Side





Sawyer Homestead  
108 Maple St.  
Sterling MA

David W. Gibbs 4-6-98  
Negative #22  
3 of 5  
West Side/Outbuilding





Sawyer Homestead  
108 Maple St.  
Sterling MA

David W. Gibbs 4-6-98  
Negative #14  
4 of 5  
Facade (from Southeast)







Sawyer Homestead  
108 Maple St.  
Sterling MA

David W. Gibbs 4-6-98  
Negative #10  
5 of 5  
East Side





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO : S. CECCACCI  
NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE : DIANE MELONE

VIEW : COLLAPSING OUTBUILDINGS ON FORMER  
BARN LOT, LOOKING E FROM RUGG RD.

PHOTO # 6





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA.

PHOTO: S. CECCACCI

NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEW: INTERIOR, ENTRANCE HALL,  
LOOKING W. AT paneled wall  
& DOOR TO STAIRS TO 2ND  
LEVEL

PHOTO # 7





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO : S. CECCACCI

NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE : DIANE MELONE

VIEW : INTERIOR, ENTRANCE HALL,  
SW CORNER WITH  
HORIZONTAL MOULDED  
WAINSCOT ON S WALL  
& DOOR TO 2ND LEVEL ON  
W WALL

PHOTO # 8





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO: S. CECCACCJ

NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEW: INTERIOR, ENTRANCE HALL  
LOOKING EAST INTO SE  
FRONT ROOM

PHOTO #9





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO: S. CECCACCI

NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEW: INTERIOR, NW ROOM LOOKING N INTO ELL

PHOTO # 10





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO: S. CECCACCI

NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEW: INTERIOR, SW FRONT

ROOM LOOKING WEST INTO  
ENTRY HALL & STAIRWAY TO  
SECOND LEVEL

PHOTO # 11





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO: S. CECCACCI  
NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEWS: INTERIOR, SW FRONT  
ROOM N WALL LOOKING  
NE

PHOTO # 12.





SAWYER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTO: S. CECCACCI  
NOVEMBER 1999

NEGATIVE: DIANE MELONE

VIEW: INTERIOR  
2ND LEVEL  
FRONT ROOMS LOOKING E

PHOTO #13





SAWYER HOMESTEAD

STERLING (WORCESTER COUNTY) MASSACHUSETTS

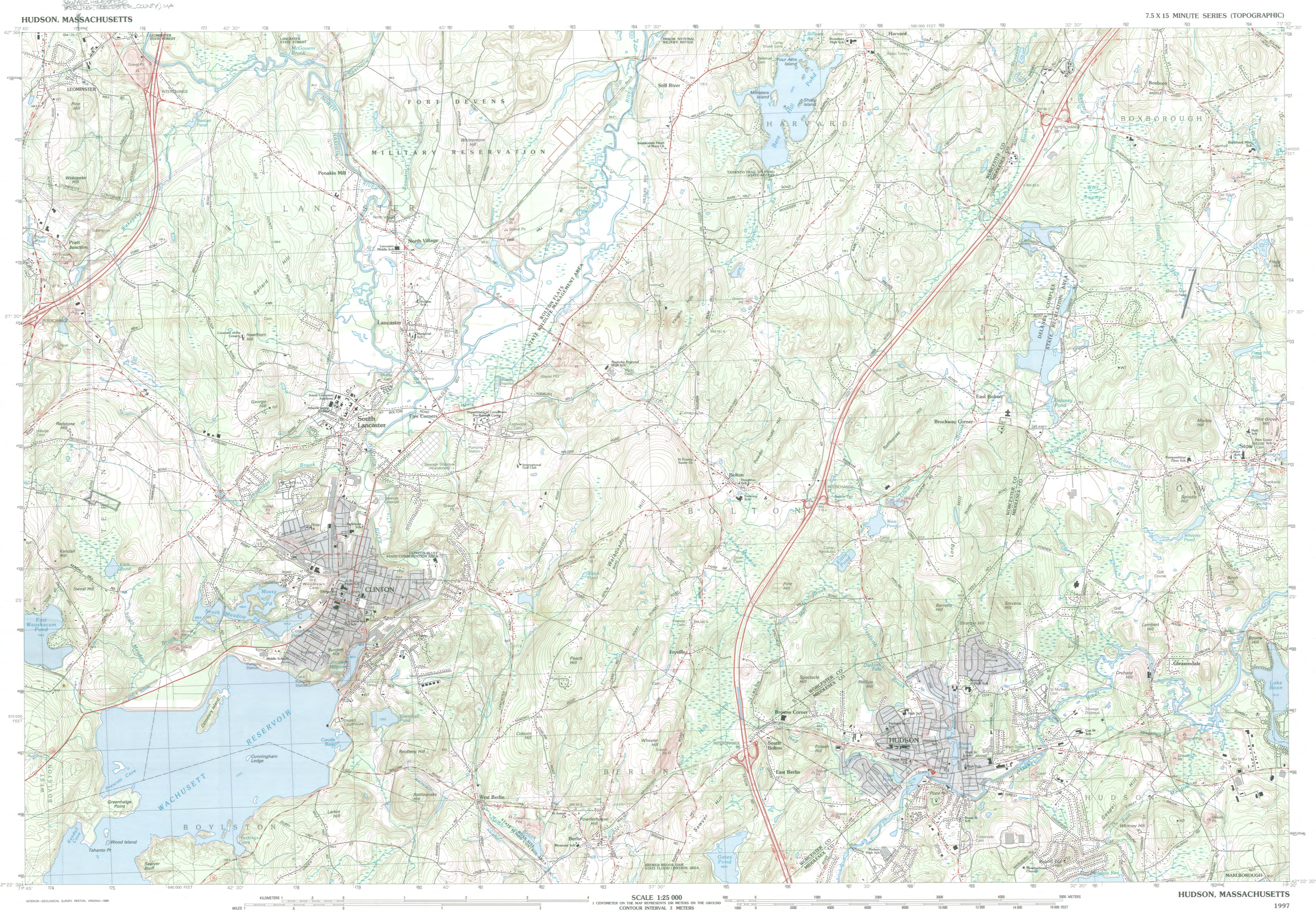




300 FT. TO 1 IN.

SANVER HOMESTEAD  
STERLING (WORCESTER COUNTY), MASSACHUSETTS





# Hudson MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric  
topographic map



- 7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE  
SHOWING
- Contours and elevations  
in meters
  - Highways, roads and other  
manmade structures
  - Water features
  - Woodland areas
  - Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Derived from imagery taken 1980 and other sources. Photospected  
using imagery dated 1997; no major culture or drainage changes  
observed. Survey control current as of 1981.  
Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1998.  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and  
1000-meter grid. Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19  
10 000-foot ticks: Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed  
corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83  
for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic  
Survey NADCON software.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

| CONVERSION TABLE                                |         | DECLINATION DIAGRAM                                                                                              | ADJOINING MAPS |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Meters                                          | Feet    |                                                                                                                  | 1              | 2                                                                                                                     | 3 |  |
| 1                                               | 3.2808  |                                                                                                                  | 4              |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 2                                               | 6.5617  |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 3                                               | 9.8425  |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 4                                               | 13.1234 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 5                                               | 16.4042 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 6                                               | 19.6850 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 7                                               | 22.9659 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 8                                               | 26.2467 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 9                                               | 29.5276 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| 10                                              | 32.8084 |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |
| To convert meters to feet<br>multiply by 3.2808 |         | UTM grid convergence<br>(GN) and 1959 magnetic<br>declination (MN)<br>at center of map<br>Diagram is approximate |                | 1 Fitchburg<br>2 Ayer<br>3 Billerica<br>4 Sterling<br>5 Maynard<br>6 Worcester North<br>7 Marlborough<br>8 Framingham |   |  |
| To convert feet to meters<br>multiply by 0.3048 |         |                                                                                                                  |                |                                                                                                                       |   |  |



## Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road, trail  
Route marker: Interstate; U.S. State  
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge  
Bridge: drawbridge  
Footbridge; overpass; underpass  
Bulldozer area: only selected landmark buildings shown  
House; barn; church; school; large structure  
Boundary  
National, with monument  
State  
County, parish  
Civil township, precinct, district  
Incorporated city, village, town  
National or State reservation, small park  
Land grant with monument; found section corner  
U.S. public lands survey: range, township; section  
Range, township; section line; location approximate  
Range or fold line  
Power: transmission line, located tower  
Dam; dam with lock  
Cemetery; grave  
Campground; picnic area; U.S. location monument  
Wildlife; water well; spring  
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave  
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation  
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression  
Disturbed surface: strip mine, levee, sand  
Sounding: depth curve  
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream  
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small  
Swamp; marsh  
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation  
Woodland; scattered trees  
Scrub; mangrove  
Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225





## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 20, 2000

Ms. Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Sawyer Homestead, 108 Maple Street, Sterling (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Betsy Friedberg'. The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a prominent 'B' and 'F'.

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Diane Melone, Lori Barr  
Susan Ceccacci, Preservation Consultant  
Cathy DiGrazia, Chair, Sterling Historical Commission  
Robert Protano, Chair, Sterling Planning Board  
Brian Kennedy, Chair, Sterling Board of Selectmen  
David W. Gibbs, Sterling Historical Society