

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 2 1987  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Ahijah Wood House

and or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 174 Worcester Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Westminster

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Worcester

code 027

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Michael and Brenda Murphy

street & number 1 Belmont Road, #122

city, town West Harwich

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts 02671

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fitchburg Registry of Deeds

street & number P.O. Box 983

city, town Fitchburg

state Massachusetts 01420

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Inventory # 61  
title the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston

state Massachusetts

## 7. Description Ahijah Wood House, Westminster, Massachusetts

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered  
(see text)

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ahijah Wood House, Westminster, is located in a rural setting on the western side of Worcester Road (Route 140), about a mile south of Westminster's center and a quarter mile north of the entrance to Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. The house, built ca. 1795, sits on a low rise above a dry-laid stone retaining wall. Built of brick laid in Flemish bond, it rises 2 1/2 stories above a fieldstone foundation and brick watertable to a steep-pitched double hipped roof. The house has a double-pile plan and is five bays wide with a central entry; two chimneys are located just behind the second hip's ridge. The roofing material is asphalt.

Also on the property are two noncontributing buildings constructed in the late 20th century: to the northwest of the house, a three-car garage; and to the south, a large barn built on the site of a 19th century barn.

The house is located at the foot of a hill (maximum elevation of the property is 1,150 feet) on a large lot that is for the most part heavily wooded. The house is set back about 30 feet from the road and is fronted by a lawn. To the rear is a fenced cow pasture. The Nathan Wood House, located a short distance north on Worcester Road, is not visible from the Ahijah Wood House.

The main, east facade is symmetrical, with two ranks of closely spaced bays flanked the entryway. The entry is approached by several granite steps. Fenestration consists of 6/6 sash here as throughout the building. On the first story, both the windows and the doorway are enhanced by five-light transoms set beneath wood-frame segmental arches. Shallow brick relieving arches further define the openings. An early 20th century photograph reveals that the transoms are not original; at one time, brick arches only enframed the windows. The doorway's frame is otherwise simple vertical boards. The second-story window openings are capped by a simple flat lintel and set flush with the narrow, lightly molded, wood cornice.

The north facade is two bays deep. Fenestration, again 6/6, repeats the main facade's first story elaboration of five-light transoms on the first story with wood-frame and brick segmental arches above, and, on the second story, flat lintel-topped sash are again flush with the cornice. The south facade is similar, with the addition of a centrally located door on the first floor. The door is believed to date from the mid 19th century.

continued

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

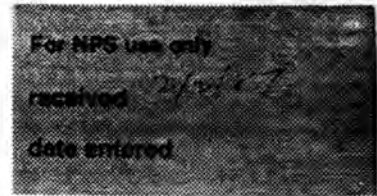
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Ahijah Wood House

Continuation sheet Westminister, Massachusetts Item number

7

Page 1



The rear, west facade contains four bays asymmetrically arranged. On the first story, two bays, one containing an early door, are masked by a modern screened porch. The other two windows contain modern sash. The second story contains four sash windows asymmetrically arrayed.

The house retains its original Federal plan, double pile with a central hall and straight flight of stairs. The two front rooms on both first and second floor contained corner fireplaces at one time, although only those in the south-facing rooms survive. Among the interior finishes remaining are elaborately molded paneling in many of the rooms, including, between the two north-facing rooms on the second floor, a folding, molded partition.

The house has undergone several changes. Alterations to the window framing some time in the early 20th century have already been described. In addition, few if any of the sash and window lights are original. The northern chimney was removed at some time in the 19th century (at which time the northern fireplaces were removed). The present chimney, added within the last decade, is nonfunctioning and purely decorative. A two-story wooden ell, its exact appearance unknown but said to be a "Beverly jog" not unlike others found in Westminister, was taken down within the past fifty years.

#### Archaeology

There is a potential for significant historical archaeological remains on the property. Controlled survey and testing may assist in documenting the history of alteration to the house, for example the location of and dimensions of the two-story ell, as well as the location of barns' shops' and other outbuildings. Occupation related features (privies, trash pits, wells) are likely to exist around the house. Sampling and analysis of these features can provide a more detailed view of the changing social, cultural, and economic patterns that characterized this prosperous, upland farmstead during the 19th century.

Furthermore, while lying beyond the immediate vicinity of the house, and thus outside the bounds of this nomination, the rear portion of the 74 acre Wood property includes landscape features whose steeply descending contours at the edge of a wetland area suggest that an earthen dam may at one time have been present.

## 8. Significance

Ahijah Wood House, Westminster, Massachusetts

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) community development
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1795      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ahijah Wood House, a fine, vernacular Federal-period residence with an unusual double-hipped roof, retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Built ca. 1795, the house is architecturally significant for its well-preserved Federal styling and historically significant for its associations with one of Westminster's most prominent local families, the Woods. The Ahijah Wood House thus fulfills Criteria B and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The town of Westminster, known initially as Narragansett #2, was one of seven townships designated in 1733 as part of a land grant made in 1728 by the General Court; this grant fulfilled a commitment made in 1685 to veterans of King Philip's War and their survivors. Located just north of Wachusett Mountain in north-central Massachusetts, Westminster received its first European settlers in 1737. In 1739, six acres were set aside on a hill north of Wachusett Mountain, in the southeast section of the township, for a meetinghouse, burying ground, and training field. Located near 156-acre Meetinghouse Pond, the area, the present Academy Hill Common, formed the center of the new village. (The remaining core of the original village settlement was nominated to the National Register in 1983 as the Academy Hill Historic District.) Settlement proceeded slowly despite the inducements of a \$40 bounty and construction of a gristmill (1741) to lure families. By 1750, only thirty-two families had erected houses and cleared their mandated three acres on lots of sixty acres each. It was not until after 1750, when the Legislature ordered meetings of proprietors to be held in the township and decisions were rendered allowing public improvements (especially highways) that new residents were retained. A poor agrarian community, Narragansett #2 was incorporated as Westminster in 1759. In April 1770, the town was granted representation in the Legislature.

By the eve of the Revolution, Westminster had grown to a population of some 1,150 people. Five schools had been built in the township. By the beginning of the Federal period, a second meetinghouse in the village center prompted the construction of several high-style residences atop Meetinghouse Hill. In 1800, the construction of the 5th Massachusetts Turnpike linking Greenfield, Mass., and Brattleboro, Vermont, with Albany and Boston was established north of the meetinghouse core, prompting the development of a new commercial village northwest and downhill from the meetinghouse. South of the village core and Meetinghouse Pond, Westminster remained predominantly unimproved woodlots (79% in 1784) or, less commonly, agricultural land (about 18% in the same year was pasturage, mowed, or tilled).

continued

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National Park Service**

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Ahijah Wood House  
Westminster, Massachusetts

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Among the improved early trails was today's Worcester Road, which became a major route joining Lancaster and Athol to the west and east with Worcester to the south. It ran north of Meetinghouse Hill and then turned south to travel between Meetinghouse Pond and Wyman Pond.

The nominated property was built ca. 1795 by Ahijah Wood (1754-1840), second son of Nathan Wood, who was among Westminster's original proprietors. The latter's Georgian-style residence is located close by on Worcester Road and is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Ahijah Wood, born in Stow, Mass., two years before his family arrived in Westminster, was a farmer who had been one of the first Westminster residents to enlist in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He was present at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Ahijah's farm is known to have held cows, swine, and horses. A woodworking shop may also have been present on the property. In addition to farming, Ahijah served his community first as assessor and then as a member of the Board of Selectmen. Both posts had been held by his father before him. The presence of late 18th/early 19th century folding panelling on the second story suggests that these two rooms may have served as a ballroom or function room during Ahijah Wood's ownership of the property, but this hypothesis is unsubstantiated.

The second owner of the property was Ahijah's son Aaron (1791-1840). An ardent abolitionist, he was an officer in the Northern Worcester County Anti-Slavery Organization and together with his relation, Ezra Wood, was chosen to represent Westminster at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston shortly before his death in 1840. Aaron was also a supporter of the temperance movement. He was chairman of the first Board of Selectmen to be chosen on a temperance platform. In addition, he served as deacon of the First Congregational Church.

Late in his life, Aaron shared ownership of the nominated property with his son, Theodore (1838-1902), who would inherit it upon his father's death. Theodore expanded the farm's generally subsistence enterprises to a large-scale operation: he kept a sizable herd of thoroughbred and graded Jersey cows, and supplied the Boston markets with milk and cream. The property was then known as Maplewood Farm, and was considered by many a model of successful agricultural practices. Like other members of the family before him, Theodore served as town assessor and selectman, as well as being a member of the School Committee.

After Theodore Wood's death in 1902, the property was sold to Frank Murdock (1867-1929), also a farmer. From him, the property passed to a son, Warren Murdock (b. 1903), an employee of the Westminster Cracker Company (whose bakery survives within the Academy Hill Historic District). With Warren's

continued

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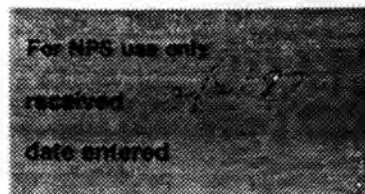
Ahijah Wood House  
Westminster, Massachusetts

Item number

8

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Continuation sheet

assumption of the property, it ceased to function as a farm. In 1975, however, it was purchased by beef and chicken producer Michael Murphy. The property has recently changed hands once again and its immediate future is uncertain.

The imposing Ahijah Wood House reflects the prominence and prosperity of its owners for three generations, the Woods. The house is architecturally significant as a handsome example of a vernacular Federal-style country dwelling. While its brick construction was not unique for Westminster at that time (the Timothy Hoar House at 115 East Road, built ca. 1790, is a particularly fine brick five-bay, hip-roofed residence), the prominently sited brick Wood house boasts the only double-hipped roof in Westminster. Further south on Westminster Road, the Isaac Williams House (ca. 1801) is another hip-roofed five-bay residence distinguished by its use of brick front and rear walls and frame end walls. A brickyard is believed to have been located near the Williams House on East Road and may have been the source for the brick used in all three buildings.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Haywood, W.S., History of Westminster. Lowell, 1893.
2. Holmes, Clay w., Genealogy of the Descendants of William Wood. Elmira, N.Y., 1901.
3. Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic and Archaeological Resources of Central Massachusetts. Boston, 1985.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7

Quadrangle name Gardner

Quadrangle scale 1: 25,000

### UTM References

A 

1	9	2	6	2	3	6	5	4	7	1	1	6	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See assessor's map

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission with Kristine Haney, Westminster Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date November, 1986

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone 617- 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. R. Osment DSHPO

title Deputy Massachusetts Historical Commission date 1/16/87  
State Historic Preservation Officer

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Ahijah Wood House

Westminster, Massachusetts

Item number 10

Continuation sheet

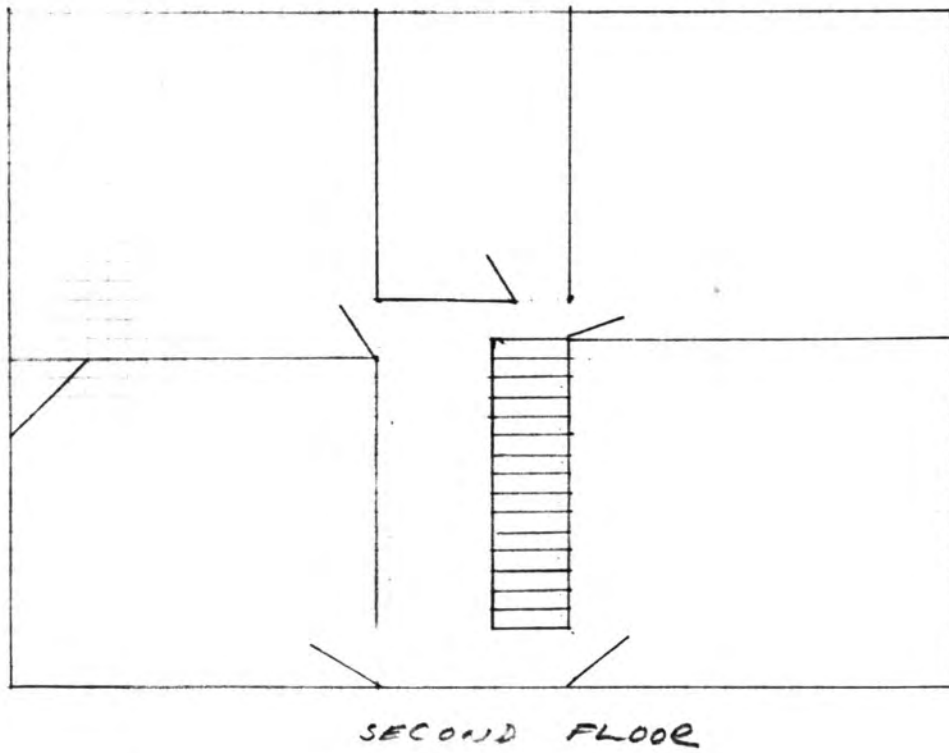
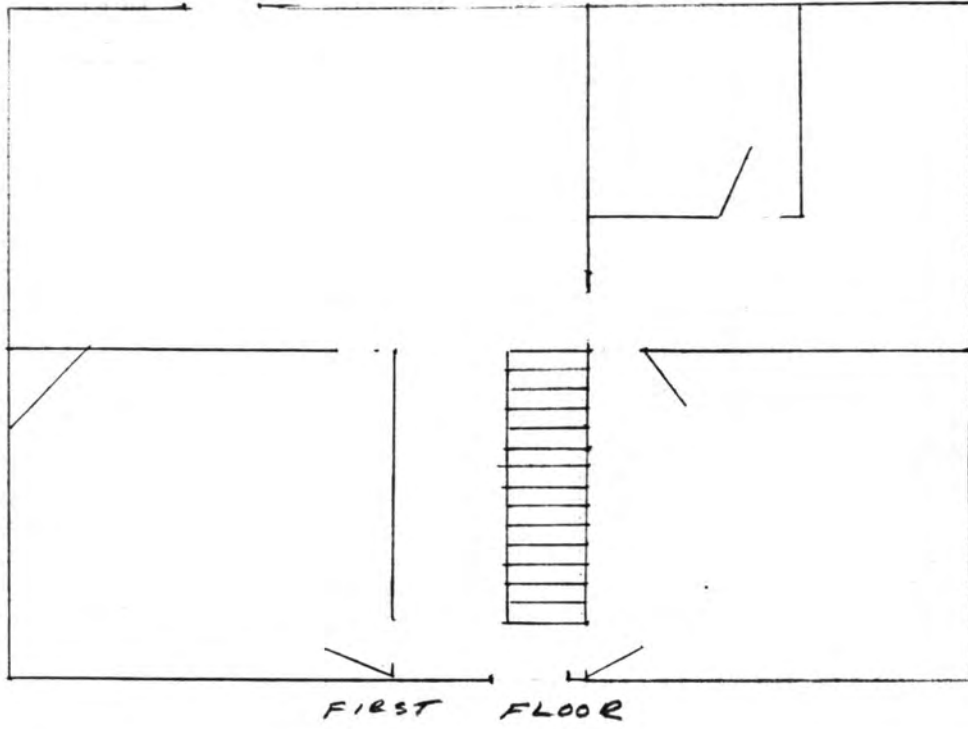
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Verbal Boundary Justification

The present property is over seventy-three acres, in a very irregular lot, which includes wetlands and wooded areas as well as pastures and lawn. Because the historic significance of the entire acreage has not been established, only the first 650 feet of the property running back from Worcester Road is being nominated at present. This includes the house and two noncontributing outbuildings, as well as thirty feet of lawn fronting the house and, to the rear, a 600-foot-deep open area, now fenced as a cow pasture. See assessor's map.

Ahijah Wood House





NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

FEB 2 1987

Wood, Ahijah, House  
Worcester County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_

Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: 3/6/87 - 3/19/87

Action:  ACCEPT

RETURN 3-17-87

REJECT \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*see the following*

Recom./Criteria Return

Reviewer Swagg

Discipline Architectural History

Date 3/17/87

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location \_\_\_\_\_

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
----------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------------

4. Owner of Property \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description \_\_\_\_\_

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

(the end of list)  
assoc. w/ family

Criterion A, rather than B, appears to be alluded to in the nomination for association w/ Wood family, not for any one specific individual. Please clarify the period of significance applicable to criterion A under agriculture & community development. It appears to end in 1902, but only 1700-1799 is checked for period. Please check other applicable blanks. Please review and revise accordingly.

19329370

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to Beth Savage (202) 343-9550

Signed Patrick Andrews Date 3/17/87 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ahijah Wood House

Continuation sheet Westminster, Massachusetts Item number 7

Page 1

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<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
(ca 1795–1902)		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	community development
<b>Specific dates</b>	ca. 1795	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown		

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ahijah Wood House, a fine, vernacular Federal-period residence with an unusual double-hipped roof, retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Built ca. 1795, the house is architecturally significant for its well-preserved Federal styling and historically significant for its associations with one of Westminster's most prominent local families, the Woods, who owned it until 1902. The Ahijah Wood House thus fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The town of Westminster, known initially as Narragansett #2, was one of seven townships designated in 1733 as part of a land grant made in 1728 by the General Court; this grant fulfilled a commitment made in 1685 to veterans of King Philip's War and their survivors. Located just north of Wachusett Mountain in north-central Massachusetts, Westminster received its first European settlers in 1737. In 1739, six acres were set aside on a hill north of Wachusett Mountain, in the southeast section of the township, for a meetinghouse, burying ground, and training field. Located near 156-acre Meetinghouse Pond, the area, the present Academy Hill Common, formed the center of the new village. (The remaining core of the original village settlement was nominated to the National Register in 1983 as the Academy Hill Historic District.) Settlement proceeded slowly despite the inducements of a \$40 bounty and construction of a gristmill (1741) to lure families. By 1750, only thirty-two families had erected houses and cleared their mandated three acres on lots of sixty acres each. It was not until after 1750, when the Legislature ordered meetings of proprietors to be held in the township and decisions were rendered allowing public improvements (especially highways) that new residents were retained. A poor agrarian community, Narragansett #2 was incorporated as Westminster in 1759. In April 1770, the town was granted representation in the Legislature.

By the eve of the Revolution, Westminster had grown to a population of some 1,150 people. Five schools had been built in the township. By the beginning of the Federal period, a second meetinghouse in the village center prompted the construction of several high-style residences atop Meetinghouse Hill. In 1800, the construction of the 5th Massachusetts Turnpike linking Greenfield, Mass., and Brattleboro, Vermont, with Albany and Boston was established north of the meetinghouse core, prompting the development of a new commercial village northwest and downhill from the meetinghouse. South of the village core and Meetinghouse Pond, Westminster remained predominantly unimproved woodlots (79% in 1784) or, less commonly, agricultural land (about 18% in the same year was pasturage, mowed, or tilled).

continued

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Haywood, W.S., History of Westminster. Lowell, 1893
2. Holmes, Clay W., Genealogy of the Descendants of William Wood. Elmira, N.Y., 1901.
3. Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic and Archaeological Resources of Central Massachusetts. Boston, 1985.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 7

Quadrangle name Gardner

Quadrangle scale 1: 25,000

### UTM References

A 

119	262365	4711650
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

--	--	--

D 

--	--	--

E 

--	--	--

F 

--	--	--

G 

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H 

--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

see assessor's map

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission  
name/title with Kristine Haney, Westminster Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date November, 1986

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie A. Talmage

Deputy MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION Massachusetts Historical Commission

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/30/87  
1/16/87

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Andrews

date 9/17/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Beth L. Savage

date 9/17/87

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Ahijah Wood House

Continuation sheet Westminister, Massachusetts

Item number

8

Page

1

Among the improved early trails was today's Worcester Road, which became a major route joining Lancaster and Athol to the west and east with Worcester to the south. It ran north of Meetinghouse Hill and then turned south to travel between Meetinghouse Pond and Wyman Pond.

The nominated property was built ca. 1795 by Ahijah Wood (1754-1840), second son of Nathan Wood, who was among Westminister's original proprietors. The latter's Georgian-style residence is located close by on Worcester Road and is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Ahijah Wood, born in Stow, Mass., two years before his family arrived in Westminister, was a farmer who had been one of the first Westminister residents to enlist in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He was present at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Ahijah's farm is known to have held cows, swine, and horses. A woodworking shop may also have been present on the property. In addition to farming, Ahijah served his community first as assessor and then as a member of the Board of Selectmen. Both posts had been held by his father before him. The presence of late 18th/early 19th century folding panelling on the second story suggests that these two rooms may have served as a ballroom or function room during Ahijah Wood's ownership of the property, but this hypothesis is unsubstantiated.

The second owner of the property was Ahijah's son Aaron (1791-1840). An ardent abolitionist, he was an officer in the Northern Worcester County Anti-Slavery Organization and together with his relation, Ezra Wood, was chosen to represent Westminister at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston shortly before his death in 1840. Aaron was also a supporter of the temperance movement. He was chairman of the first Board of Selectmen to be chosen on a temperance platform. In addition, he served as deacon of the First Congregational Church.

Late in his life, Aaron shared ownership of the nominated property with his son, Theodore (1838-1902), who would inherit it upon his father's death. Theodore expanded the farm's generally subsistence enterprises to a large-scale operation: he kept a sizable herd of thoroughbred and graded Jersey cows, and supplied the Boston markets with milk and cream. The property was then known as Maplewood Farm, and was considered by many a model of successful agricultural practices. Like other members of the family before him, Theodore served as town assessor and selectman, as well as being a member of the School Committee.

After Theodore Wood's death in 1902, the property was sold to Frank Murdock (1867-1929), also a farmer. From him, the property passed to a son, Warren Murdock (b. 1903), an employee of the Westminister Cracker Company (whose bakery survives within the Academy Hill Historic District). With Warren's

continued

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet    Ahijah Wood House    Item number    8    Page    2  
Westminster

assumption of the property, it ceased to function as a farm. In 1975, however, it was purchased by beef and chicken producer Michael Murphy. The property has recently changed hands once again and its immediate future is uncertain.

The imposing Ahijah Wood House reflects the prominence and prosperity of its owners for three generations, the Woods. The house is architecturally significant as a handsome example of a vernacular Federal-style country dwelling. While its brick construction was not unique for Westminster at that time (the Timothy Hoar House at 115 East Road, built ca. 1790, is a particularly fine brick five-bay, hip-roofed residence), the prominently sited brick Wood house boasts the only double-hipped roof in Westminster. Further south on Westminster Road, the Isaac Williams House (ca. 1801) is another hip-roofed five-bay residence distinguished by its use of brick front and rear walls and frame end walls. A brickyard is believed to have been located near the Williams House on East Road and may have been the source for the brick used in all three buildings.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Ahijah Wood House

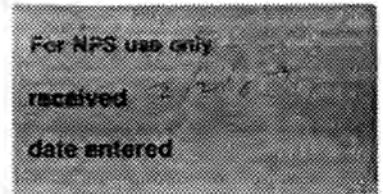
Westminster, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number

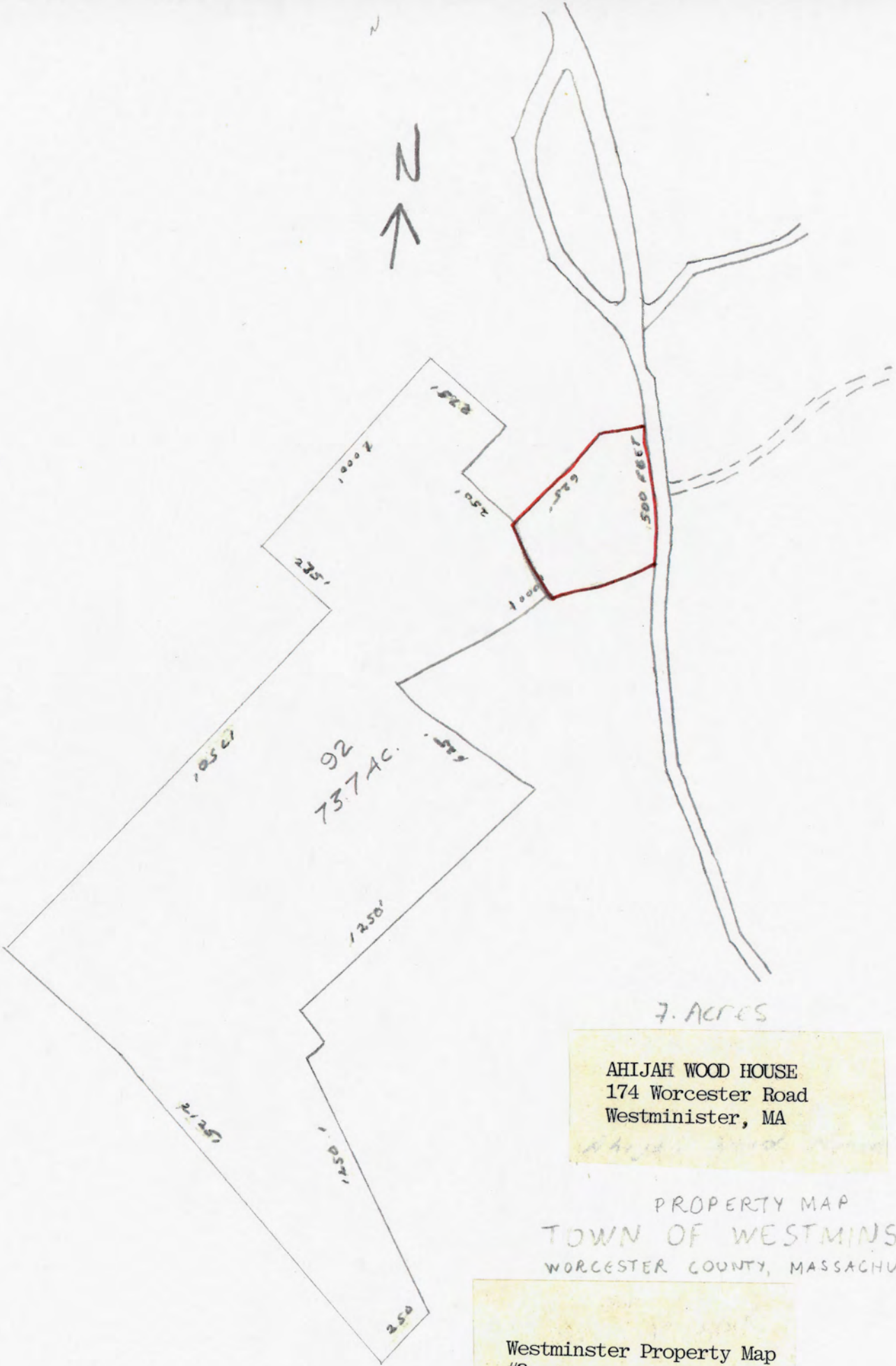
10

Page 1



Verbal Boundary Justification

The present property is over seventy-three acres, in a very irregular lot, which includes wetlands and wooded areas as well as pastures and lawn. Because the historic significance of the entire acreage has not been established, only the first 650 feet of the property running back from Worcester Road is being nominated at present. This includes the house and two noncontributing outbuildings, as well as thirty feet of lawn fronting the house and, to the rear, a 600-foot-deep open area, now fenced as a cow pasture. See assessor's map.



7. ACRES

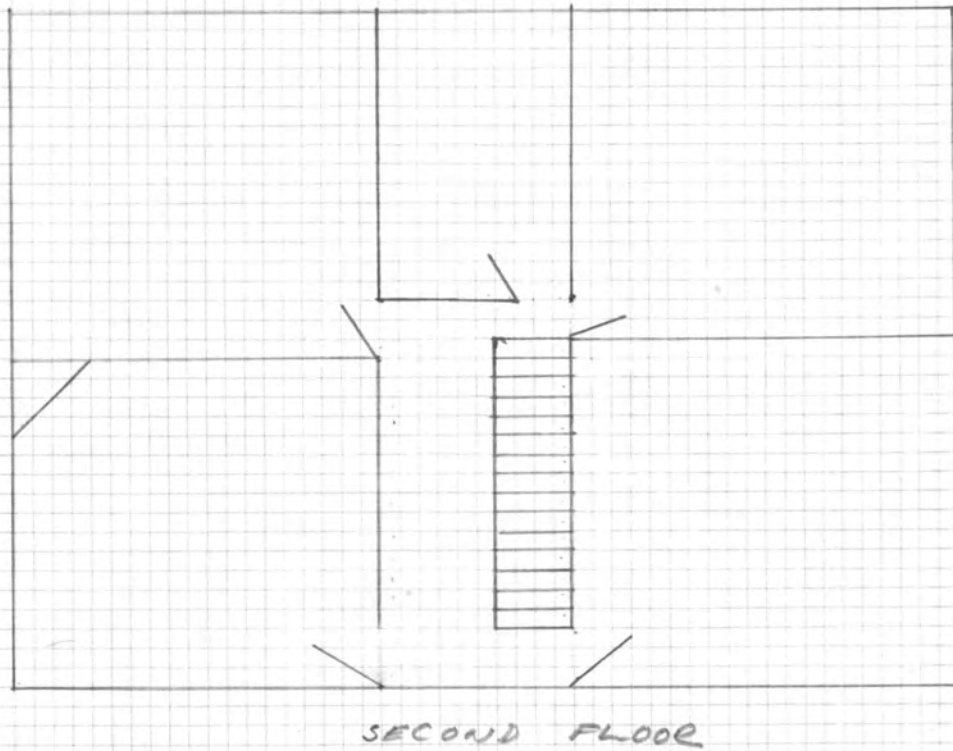
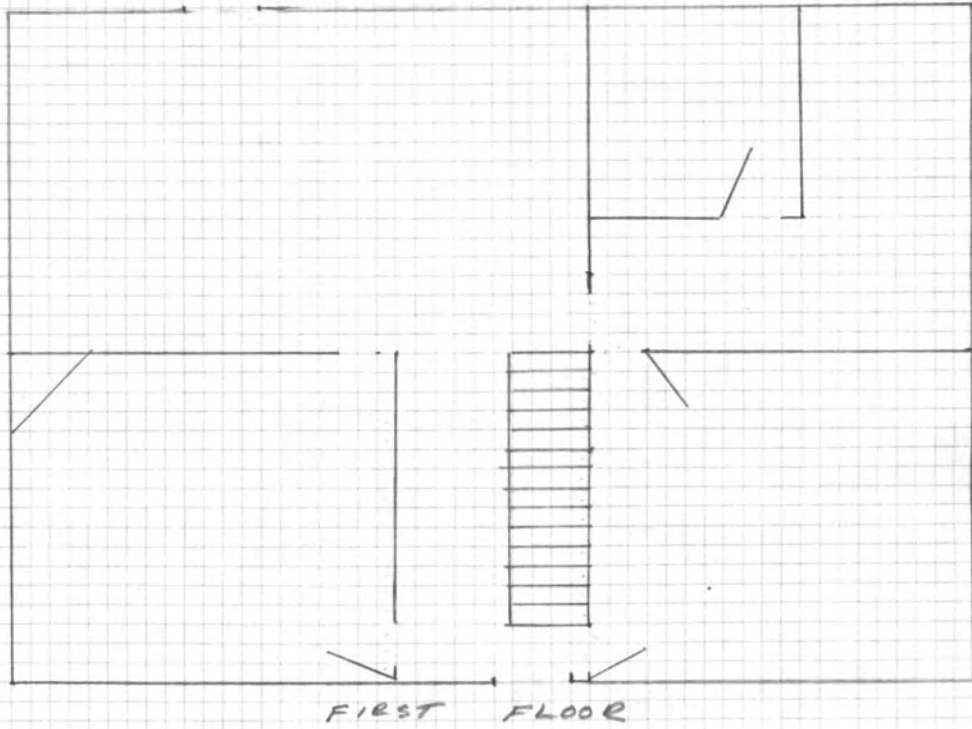
AHIJAH WOOD HOUSE  
174 Worcester Road  
Westminister, MA

PROPERTY MAP  
TOWN OF WESTMINSTER  
WORCESTER COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

Westminster Property Map  
#3  
Scale: 1" = 500'

2/2/87

# Ahijah Wood House



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Wood, Ahijah, House  
Worcester County  
MASSACHUSETTS

~~Substantive Review~~

Working No. 2-2-87  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88  
Date Due: 9-20-87  
Action:  ACCEPT 9-17-87  
 RETURN  
 REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*fine vernacular Federal-period residence associated w/ one of town's most prominent local families, the Woods, who retained ownership for over a century.*

Recom./Criteria: Accept A+C  
Reviewer: George  
Discipline: Architectural History  
Date: 9/14/87  
\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location \_\_\_\_\_

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description \_\_\_\_\_

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

---

**8. Significance**

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates                      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

---

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

---

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

---

Verbal boundary description and justification

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title                      date

---

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Ahijah Wood House  
175 Worcester Rd  
Westminster, MA 01473  
photo: K. Haney; 11/84  
neg: 164 Worcester Rd  
1 of 2: front view

2/11/84

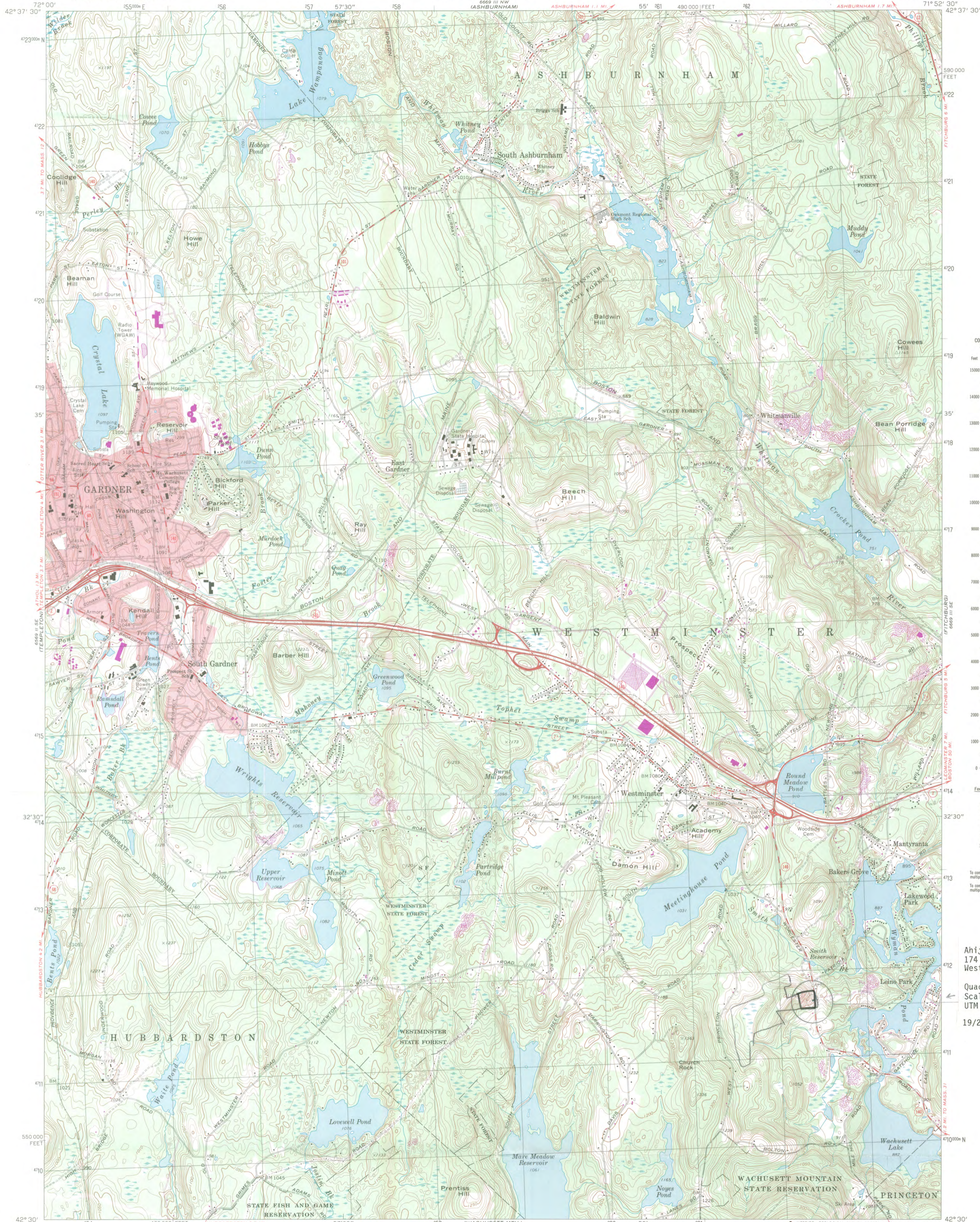




Ahijah Wood House  
175 Worcester Rd  
Westminster, MA 01473  
photo: K. Haney; 11/84  
1 of 2; front angle view

2/2/87

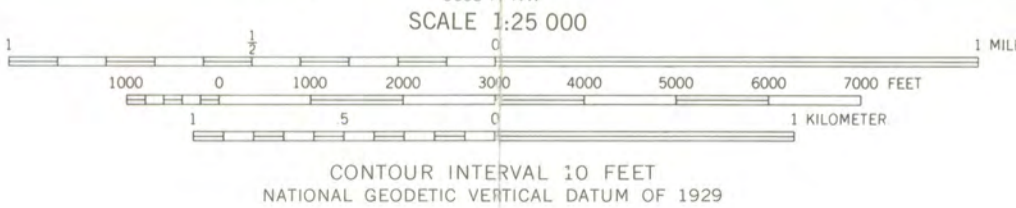




To convert feet to meters  
multiply by 0.3048  
To convert meters to feet  
multiply by 3.2808

Anijah Wood House  
174 Worcester Road  
Westminister, MA  
Quad: Gardner  
Scale: 1:25,000  
UTM reference:  
19/262/365/4711/650

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1939. Topography by planetable surveys 1943 and 1944  
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1970  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,  
zone 19  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings  
are shown  
There may be private holdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of  
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other  
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route

GARDNER, MASS.  
N4230—W7152.5/7.5  
1970  
PHOTOREVISED 1979  
AMS 6669 III SW—SERIES V814

33



## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State  
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

### Massachusetts Historical Commission

**Valerie A. Talmage**

*Executive Director*

*State Historic Preservation Officer*

July 29, 1987

Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of Interior  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find six nominations that were returned to the MHC for technical and substantive corrections. The following nominations are enclosed:

Boston (Roxbury), Abbotsford, 300 Walnut Avenue  
Brockton, Brockton Edison Electric Illuminating Company Power Station  
Richmond, Nichols-Sterner House  
✓ Westminister, Ahijah Wood House, 174 Worcester Road  
Westminister, Nathan Wood House, 164 Worcester Road  
Winchendon, Old Centre Historic District

All corrections have been made.

Sincerely,

*Betsy Friedberg*

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

AUG 6 1987