

576

MAY 15 1989

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
A	153

Town Southbridge

Address 386 Main Street

Historic Name E. Merritt Cole House

Use: Present offices

Original residence

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1855-1878

Source maps

Style Gothic Revival

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) front & side

porch columns (1960's-80's)

Condition Excellent

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage one acre or less

Setting in parking lot of a store

flanked by other houses

Recorded by S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Com-

mission

Date May 1986

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

UTM REFERENCE 18/745 220/4662 330

USGS QUADRANGLE Southbridge Mass - Conn

SCALE 1:25,000

## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The E. Merritt Cole House is significant for its association with the town's mid-19th century real estate development and its stylish and early Stick style design. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

Built on a T-shaped plan, the house has a two story projecting porch with tall columns. The most distinctive feature of the house is the elaborate relief treatment of the exterior clap-board walls with half timbering, tongue and groove diagonal panels, board and batten motifs and other three dimensional geometric patterned ornamental details. The only major alteration appears to have been the replacement of the porch columns. Although it is not clear how they looked originally, the present simple square posts do not seem to be out of keeping. The originals may have been similar, but with chamfered corners. The building still retains its original gable apron, bracketed overhanging eaves and original double leafed entrance doors.

This house is unusual both in Southbridge and in the larger area of Central Massachusetts for its style and the extremely high quality of its ornament. Its elaborate surface treatment seems to have been the inspiration for other houses in Southbridge such as 67 South Street and a group of Vernacular workers' cottages built near the American Optical Company factory, on Crystal and Lens Streets (see form # B-215).

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

This house was built in the early 1800's by Jacob Edwards. Some time between 1855 and 1878, and possibly before 1870, it was remodeled to its present Gothic Revival appearance. Available maps showing the ground plan of the house are imprecise and make a more accurate dating impossible. These maps also do not suggest clearly which portion of the building is the original house.

E. Merritt Cole was an original stockholder in the American Optical Company when it was incorporated in 1869. Holding 80 shares of the total 400 shares, he held more than any other of the original six shareholders, except Robert H. Cole who held 150. Present research has not made it clear what his relationship was to Robert Cole. Robert Cole became president of the newly formed company and Merritt Cole became treasurer. Merritt Cole's duties at American Optical were diversified, including some travel to visit the optical trade and working on problems related to shortening the manufacturing process. At times he assisted in "getting down" (melting down) gold and silver stock and making some odd styles of gold frames.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases, directories  
Southbridge. Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, Vol. II, p. 175.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Southbridge MRA  
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review Date/Signature

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 11. | Building at 38--42 Worcester Street<br>Entered in the<br>National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 12. | Building at 52 Main Street<br>Entered in the<br>National Register          | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 13. | Central Mills Historic District<br>Entered in the<br>National Register     | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 14. | Chamberlain--Bordeau House<br>Entered in the<br>National Register          | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 15. | Chapin Block<br>Entered in the<br>National Register                        | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 16. | Cheney, Alpha M. House<br>Entered in the<br>National Register              | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 17. | Cheney, J.M., Rental House<br>Entered in the<br>National Register          | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 18. | Clarke--Glover Farmhouse<br>Entered in the<br>National Register            | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 19. | Cliff Cottage<br>Entered in the<br>National Register                       | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |
| 20. | Cole, E., Merritt, House<br>Entered in the<br>National Register            | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89<br>Attest _____ |

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Cole, E. Merritt, House

MULTIPLE NAME: Southbridge MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000576

NOMINATOR: STATE

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: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    6/22/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

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CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_ count      \_\_\_ resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

\_\_\_ historic      \_\_\_ current

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DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_ architectural classification  
\_\_\_ materials  
\_\_\_ descriptive text

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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

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_ acreage              \_\_\_ verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_ UTM's              \_\_\_ boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_ sketch maps      \_\_\_ USGS maps      \_\_\_ photographs      \_\_\_ presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



CLAMBERT  
& ASSOCIATES

CLAMBERT  
& ASSOCIATES  
Golfers Park, Massachusetts

386 Main Street (A-153)

E. Merritt Cole House

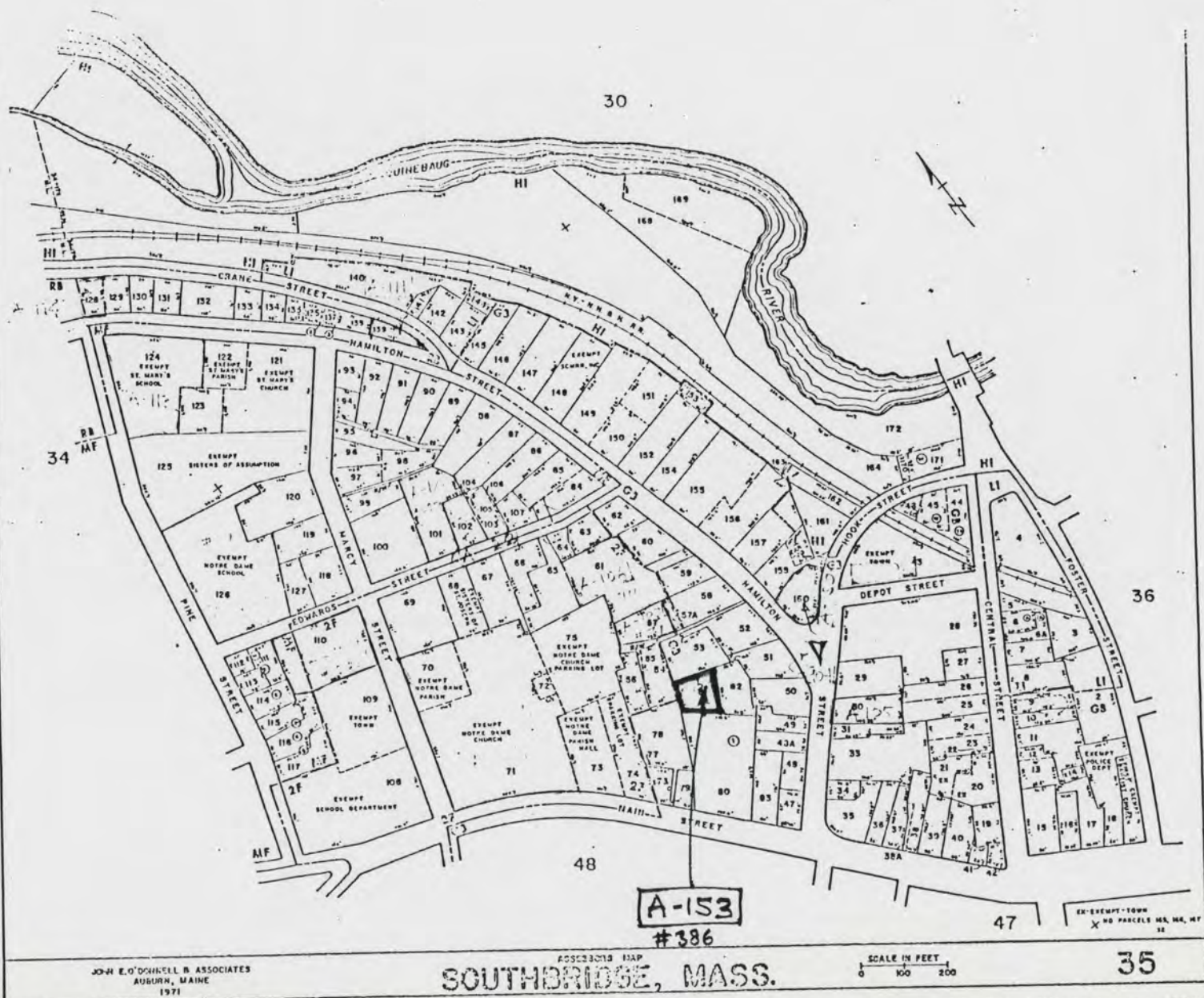
Southbridge, MASS. MRA

1986

Southbridge Historical Commission

Roll #6

SOUTHRIDGE MASS  
MRA



386 Main Street

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294