UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Deerfield Village in Deerfield, Massachusetts, stands on a natural plateau above the water meadows of the Deerfield Valley, a few miles southwest of the confluence of the Deerfield and Connecticut Rivers. To the east of the village, on the opposite side of U.S. 5 (S.R. 10), is a line of wooded hills (part of the Pocumtuck Range), and to the west the winding course of the Deerfield River and on the opposite side of Interstate Highway 91, another line of low hills. The northern end of the plateau is defined by the Deerfield River, which swings east at that point and forms part of the boundary between the towns of Deerfield and Greenfield. At the southern end of the plateau is another village, Wapping; beyond it the valley rises slightly to South Deerfield (see accompanying U.S.G.S. map: Greenfield, Massachusetts Quadrangle; 1968).

The original purchase of land for the Deerfield settlement--some 8,000 acres--was concluded in 1667; lots were apportioned and the village formally laid out in 1671, with a longitudinal axis, "The Street," extending almost exactly one mile north-south along the plateau. Twenty-three lots were created on the east side of "The Street" and twenty on the west, not all of the same size. In addition to his house lot, east settler also received tracts for farming and grazing outside the village on the North and South Meadows. Land for the common or training ground, also the location of the meeting house and town well, was reserved on the west side of "The Street" at its midpoint. East-west streets were gradually added to the village; the most important of them, Albany Road, extended west from "The Street" at the edge of the common.

Although abandoned after the Bloody Brook Massacre, Deerfield Village was resettled by 1682. The village had 268 residents by 1704, and a square log stockade had been constructed as a defense against Indian attack. Centered on "The Street," it enclosed the common with the meeting house and well and fifteen houses. Another twenty-six houses stood north and south of the stockade along "The Street." Despite the stockade, there was almost no organized resistance to the attack by French and Indians on February 29, 1704, and the village was virtually destroyed. The last building definitely known to have survived the massacre intact, the Hoyt Tavern or Indian House, was demolished in 1848 after local efforts to preserve it proved unsuccessful. Portions of two other buildings, the Old Manse and the Frary House, are believed to predate the massacre.

Today the character of Old Deerfield is that of a restored and well-preserved rural village of the mid-18th century with a few later and non-intrusive additions. The street pattern is unchanged, the original division of lots is still visible along the broad, tree-lined Street, and the North and South Meadows remain in active agricultural use. Among the fifty-three buildings

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1600's-1675-1704

When settled in the late 1660's, Deerfield Village in the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts, was the northernmost outpost of English America, and in its early history characterizes the struggle of the colonies to extend their frontiers westward. Though savage raids by French and Indians virtually destroyed the settlement in 1675 and 1704, it was rebuilt each time and by the 1750's had become the center of a thriving wheat industry and an important cattle market. The prosperity of that period is reflected today in the well-preserved houses which line "The Street," the nearly mile-long tree-lined axis of the village.

Asher Benjamin, others unknown

More than thirty of the fifty-three buildings in Old Deerfield date from the Colonial and Revolutionary period, and portions of two may pre-date the massacre of 1704. Under the auspices of Historic Deerfield, Inc., a publicly supported organization established as the Heritage Foundation in 1952, Deerfield Village has become one of the most effective community restorations in America. Seventeen of the restored buildings are open to the public throughout the year, including eleven residences furnished with period items, many of them of local origin.

Historical Summary

The Indians who lived in the Deerfield Valley called both the river and the range of hills east of it Pocumtuck, the name of their tribe. Although they fought occasionally with other tribes, the Pocumtucks maintained their control of the area until the mid-17th century when they were nearly annihilated in a war with the Mohawks from the Hudson River Valley. In 1667 John Pynchon, agent for the town of Dedham, was able to purchase from the surviving Pocumtucks 8,000 acres of land, to be used to reimburse those people whose land in Dedham had been taken as the site of a town for John Eliot's Missionary Indians. The first settler, Samuel Hinsdell, arrived in the valley with his family in 1669. Lots were apportioned and a village formally laid out in 1671. By 1673 twenty families were living in the settlement, which they called Deerfield.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

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Deerfield Village, principal owners:

Historic Deerfield, Inc.
Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

Town of Deerfield Town Hall Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

Deerfield Academy
Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

Bement School Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

Indian House Memorial, Inc.
Deerfield, Massachusetts 01342

various private owners of residences and farm land.

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standing in the village, there are examples of Federal (Wright House), Greek Revival (White Church, 1838; Town Hall, 1846), and later architectural styles, but the majority date from the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, including four moved from other locations to prevent their demolition. Historic Deerfield, Inc. and individual owners have restored nearly all the buildings in the village and seventeen of them are now open to the public. The latter include eleven residences furnished with period pieces, many of local origin.

Though replacement of elements such as doorways has been necessary for a few buildings, there is only one full reconstruction in the village, a copy of the Indian House erected in 1929. The single part of the original house which survives is the front doorway; preserved in the Memorial Hall Museum, it still bears the marks of the 1704 massacre. Among the newest buildings in the village are those constructed for Deerfield Academy. Three dormitories erected on "The Street" facing the common are reproductions of Colonial houses and complement their authentic neighbors. Other Academy buildings on Albany Road, though more modern in style, do not detract from the character of the village as a whole. Parking, both for the Academy and for exhibit buildings, is limited and generally well-screened.

A summary of representatives buildings in the landmark district follows (north to south along "The Street"). Each is identified by name on the accompanying village plan, a photocopy of that included in "A Brief History of Deerfield, Massachusetts" (Deerfield, 1972).

Ashley House. This two-story building was purchased by the Rev. Jonathan Ashley in 1733 when it was relatively new and has one of the first center hallways in the village; the gambrel roof extends in a "saltbox" at the rear (west). Several features of the Ashley House are typical of most Deerfield residences of the same period: unpainted clapboards, interior brick chimneys, narrow 9/9 windows, and the "Connecticut Valley" doorway (double doors flanked by pilasters carrying a broken scroll or swan's neck pediment).

Wright House. The front (western) portion of this house--2-1/2 stories, brick, with gabled roof--was constructed in 1824 by Asa Stebhins for his son, Asa Jr.; the two-story frame and clapboard ell was added later. The house is now known by the name of its second owner.

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Sheldon-Hawkes House. This house was constructed in two sections, the 2-1/2-story gable-roofed main block in 1743, the 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed ell in 1802. Like the adjacent Ashley House, the main block displays typical Deerfield elements: unpainted clapboards, 9/9 windows, and a "Connecticut Valley" doorway, in this case with triangular pediment. George Sheldon, who produced the authoritative History of Deerfield, was born in the house in 1818 and lived there until his death in 1916.

Asa Stebbins House. Constructed in 1799, this 2-1/2-story building was the first brick residence in Deerfield; the rear ell originally carried a gambrel roof with dormers but c. 1879 was raised to a full 2 stories with gabled roof. Exterior elements include twin interior chimneys, flat arches above 12/12 windows, a belt course between the first and second floors, and a front (west) entrance recessed in a round-arched opening set with brick quoins. The interior features a curved flying stair, garlanded plasterwork and carved mantels, and painted free-hand decorations in the dining room and pantry.

Deerfield Inn. This 2-story frame and clapboard building was completed and opened as an inn in 1885; the 2-story Doric portico was added early in the present century and in 1945 the building was renovated and enlarged at the rear (west).

Old Manse. The main block of this frame and clapboard house--2-stories with double-hipped roof--was constructed by Joseph Barnard in 1768; the 1-1/2-story gambrel-roofed ell, originally a separate cottage, may have been built as early as 1694. The house derives its name from the period (1807-85) when it was the home of Samuel Willard, minister of Deerfield's First Church. Exterior details include window caps, quoins, a dentil band at the eaves, and a pilastered and pedimented entrance at the center of each elevation.

Brick Church (First Church of Deerfield). Constructed in 1824, this brick building was Deerfield's fifth house of worship; it was designed by Winthrop Clapp and shows the influence of both Isaac Damon and Asher Benjamin. Exterior detail includes 3 doors on the east, each with fan; double tiers of 12/12 windows with blinds set in round-arched recesses; and a square, louvered belfry topped by a three-stage octagonal spire. The interior, featuring a high mahogany pulpit, paneled box pews, and galleries supported on Doric columns, was restored in 1916.

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Frary House. According to local tradition, portions of this 2-1/2-story building date from 1698, though its primary features appear to date from the mid-18th century when Salah Barnard, who operated a tavern in the house, constructed a large addition at its southern end. Exterior details include unpainted clapboards; a pedimented, 1-story entrance porch; 12/12 windows with molded caps; a dentil band at the eaves; and pilastered and pedimented entrances on the west and south elevations. The ballroom (in the addition), with its arched alcoves, carved fireplace, coved ceiling, and musicians' gallery, is possibly the most elegant room in the village.

Town Hall. This 2-story frame and clapboard building in Greek Revival style was erected in 1846. Details include an Ionic portico with triangular pediment on the south, 1-story Ionic porch on the west, corner pilasters, and 6/6 windows with louvered blinds. Just west of the Town Hall is the Town Office, a small, 1-story brick building with "false front" bearing the date 1895.

Memorial Hall. Designed by Asher Benjamin and completed in 1799, this was the first home of Deerfield Academy; it was originally 2 stories high, topped by a cupola, but a rear wing and third story with hipped-roof were added in 1809-10. When the Academy moved to its present location (facing the common) in 1878, the hall was taken over by the newly formed Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, which opened it as a museum of local history in 1880. Memorial Hall was fully restored in 1968 and the adjoining Memorial Library, a duplicate of the hall as it looked after the 1809-10 additions, was completed in 1970.

Wells-Thorn House. The earliest section of this frame and clapboard house, a 1-1/2-story gable-roofed cottage (now the rear ell), was built in 1717 by Ebenezer Wells. In 1751 he constructed the main block, 2-1/2-stories with gabled roof broken by a central chimney. Later details include the window caps (1783) and the front (west) entrance with pilasters and full entablature (exact date unknown). The 1-1/2-story gable-roofed shop at the eastern end of the ell is a reconstruction of the original, removed early in this century.

Dwight-Barnard House. This 2-story frame and clapboard house was constructed at Springfield, Massachusetts, c. 1754 by Joseph Dwight and moved to its present location in 1950 to prevent its demolition. Architectural details include a corbelled center chimney; 12/12 windows, topped on the first floor front by pedimented caps; and dormers with alternating triangular and semi-circular pediments. The "Connecticut Valley" doorway with pilasters and broken scroll pediment is a reproduction of the original.

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When King Philip's War spread to western Massachusetts, militia companies were sent from the eastern part of the colony to defend the towns in and near the Connecticut Valley, the northernmost of which was Deerfield. On September 1, 1675, a band of sixty Indians attacked Deerfield but were unable to break through the settlers defenses; a second attack on September 12 was also repulsed. On September 18 a convoy of wagons under command of Captain Thomas Lothrop left Deerfield to carry much-needed grain to the garrison at Hadley. When the convoy halted at a small stream about two miles south of the village, they were ambushed by Indians; sixty-four teamsters and soldiers were killed in the encounter, known as the Bloody Brook Massacre. Deerfield was abandoned to the Indians after that disaster, but in 1682 several families returned. Within a few years a square log stockade enclosed the meeting house, town well, and fifteen houses, and twenty-six other houses stood north and south of it.

In 1704, during Queen Anne's War, Deerfield was again almost completely destroyed. Late in 1703, in order to block the signing of a peace treaty between the Abenaki Indians and the English, Governor de Vaudreuil of Canada had offered the Indians French support in a raiding expedition against an English frontier town. His offer was accepted and in the dead of winter a party of 200 French regulars and 142 Abenaki and Caughnawaga Indians marched against Deerfield. At daybreak on February 29, 1704, the attackers swooped down on the village from the northwest, surprising the sentries and opening the stockade gates. Once inside they met with almost no organized resistance. Houses were looted and burned, and more than half of the inhabitants of the village were killed. The attack lasted for five hours before English reinforcements arrived; the French and Indians then retreated, taking with them 112 prisoners. Twenty of the captives died on the 300-mile trek north to Canada but most of those who survived were eventually redeemed.

For the next two years Deerfield was little more than an isolated military outpost but in 1706 many of the former settlers returned and again began to rebuild the village. Though Governor Jonathan Belcher of the Province of Massachusetts Bay met delegates from the six Iroquois nations at Deerfield in 1735 and exchanged pledges of friendship, the village was raided again in 1746 and the threat of Indian attack continued until the final French capitulation at Montreal in 1760. In the meantime Deerfield had developed into an important agricultural center, supplying large quantities of wheat and beef for the English forces during the French and Indian Wars of the 1740's and 1750's. The village's growing prosperity was expressed in substantial houses and fine furnishings imported from England or made by the skilled craftsmen of the Connecticut Valley.

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In the period preceeding the American Revolution, the clash between Deerfield Whigs and Tories became both bitter and absorbing. Excited gatherings took place at the taverns patronized by the rival factions (Bernard's or Saxton's for the Whigs, Hoyt's or Catlin's for the Tories), particularly on the day when the weekly post rider arrived from Boston. Once the war began, Deerfield men took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and other engagements, and the village itself became a veritable commissary for American forces. In 1775 Colonel Benedict Arnold, then a respected patriot, came to Deerfield to arrange for the purchase of 15 tons of beef for the troops at Ticonderoga.

Agriculture, especially the raising of stall-fed oxen for Boston and New York markets, continued to be important to Deerfield until the advent of the railroads brought overwhelming competition from the western plains. However, by that time the village had already begun to feel the influence of a new interest, The Deerfield Academy had been established as a coeducational boarding school by act of the Massachusetts legislature in 1797 and opened on January 1, 1799, in a building designed for it by Asher Benjamin (now Memorial Hall, the museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association). The Academy operated with varying success during the 19th century, moved in 1878 to its present campus facing the village common, and in 1902 began the period of its greatest prestige (as a college preparatory school for boys) with the appointment of Frank L. Boyden as headmaster (which post he held until his retirement in 1968). Early in the 20th century Deerfield Academy was joined by two other educational institutions. Eaglebrook School, located on the hill east of the village, is a boy's boarding school founded in 1921. The Bement School, occupying buildings at the northern end of the village, is a coeducational boarding and day school established in 1925.

Today, in addition to its continuing role as a center for education, Deerfield Village is one of the most successful community restorations in the United States. The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (founded in 1870 by Deerfield historian George Sheldon), the schools, the Town of Deerfield, the First Church, and private owners have contributed to that success by restoring and preserving individual buildings. A new dimension was added to historic preservation in Deerfield in 1952, when Mr. and Mrs. Henry N. Flynt formed the Heritage Foundation, now known as Historic Deerfield, Inc. In addition to operating eleven exhibit houses, Historic Deerfield holds semi-annual antiques seminars and other education programs, conducts a publication program, and since 1956 has sponsored a summer fellowship program in early American history and decorative arts for college undergraduates, using the village itself as a teaching laboratory.

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Deerfield Village, boundaries

The boundaries of the national historic landmark designation for Deerfield Village, Deerfield, Massachusetts, are shown in black on the accompanying U.S.G.S. map (7.5 minute series; Greenfield, Massachusetts Quandrangle; 1968). A photocopy of the village plan included in A Brief History of Deerfield, Massachusetts (Deerfield, 1972) gives the name, date, and location of major buildings in the core of the landmark district. Specific landmark boundaries are defined as follows:

beginning at the intersection of the southern (at the point) bank of the Deerfield River and the western curbline of U.S. 5 (S.R. 10); thence, southerly by said western curbline to its intersection with a line drawn directly east-west through the intersection of Mill Village Road and an unidentified road leading southeasterly to U.S. 5; thence, westerly along said east-west line to its intersection with the eastern (at that point) bank of the Deerfield River; thence, northerly and easterly along said river bank to the point of beginning.

Note: the scattered buildings of modern date along the western curbline of U.S. 5 (S.R. 10) do not contribute to the national significance of the landmark district.

Justification: Old Deerfield Village possesses an unusual degree of integrity in that its historic buildings and street plan are relatively unaltered and the original settlers' farming and grazing tracts in the North and South Meadows remain in active agricultural use. To maintain that integrity the entire complex of village and meadows is included in the national historic landmark boundary.