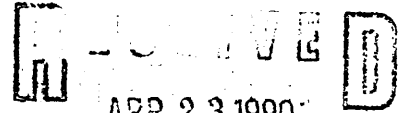


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name STOCKBRIDGE COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT other names/site number

2. Location

street & number N/A city, town Stockbridge state Vermont code VT county Windsor code 027 zip code 05772

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official Date 4/12/90

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register. Signature of the Keeper: Melissa Byers Date of Action: 5/24/90

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - single dwelling
Education - school
Religion - religious structure
Funerary - cemetery
Landscape - public common

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - single dwelling
Religion - religious structure
Funerary - cemetery
Landscape - public common

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Greek Revival
No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls weatherboard
vinyl
roof steel
other brick
cast iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

(Text appears on continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1786-c. 1930

Significant Dates

c. 1804
c. 1830
1884

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Keyes, Elias

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

(Text appears on continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other _____

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 15

UTM References

A

18	6	80	75	0
Zone	Easting		Northing	

48	50	4	90

C

18	6	80	4	20
Zone	Easting		Northing	

48	50	3	50

B

18	6	80	6	80
Zone	Easting		Northing	

48	50	2	90

D

18	6	80	6	20
Zone	Easting		Northing	

48	50	5	50

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date August 1989

street & number Green Mountain Turnpike telephone 802-875-3379

city or town Chester state Vermont zip code 05143-9418

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Situated on a hillside terrace within the White River valley, the Stockbridge Common Historic District consists of six buildings and a cemetery surrounding a public common. At least five of the buildings were constructed during the century-long period from 1787 to 1884; one, the Town Shed/Garage (#2), may have been rebuilt c. 1930 from a horse shed built in 1837. The vernacular buildings display only the rudimentary influence of the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Five distinct types of buildings exist in the historic district, sharing domestic scale, wood framing, and gable roofs. The historic district possesses relatively high integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association despite the twentieth-century removal of four primary buildings. Some changes of exterior sheathing materials as well as usage have occurred among the extant buildings but the historic district retains the essential character of an early nineteenth-century rural hamlet unmarred by twentieth-century intrusions.

The Stockbridge Common Historic District is comprised of a total of six buildings plus Maplewood Cemetery and the namesake Common. The historic district encompasses the surviving components of a minor hamlet in a sparsely settled, rural township whose principal village, Gaysville, lies five miles to the southeast. The hamlet occupies a small flat terrace on the northeast side of, and about 100 feet above the bottom of, the White River valley. The present state highway, Route 100, follows the valley floor, bypassing the hamlet. Relatively steep, forested hillsides flank the agricultural bottomland of the narrow valley.

The hamlet (and historic district) is traversed in the northwest-southeast direction by the former Stockbridge-Rochester highway, a relatively narrow paved road that adjoins the north side of the Common. A gravel driveway encloses the other sides of the Common, providing access to the Union Church (#1), the town shed (#2), and Maplewood Cemetery (#3). At the southeast end of the Common, a gravel town road diverges from the paved road and leads northeastward onto the hillside.

The Common itself is a roughly rectangular area of flat terrain. Nearly its entire area consists simply of an open lawn. The east quarter is shaded by several small trees, mostly deciduous species. A row of mature maple trees formerly defined the north edge of the Common but those trees have succumbed during recent decades to age and disease.

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Most of the buildings in the historic district are arrayed around the perimeter of the Common, generally facing it across the roadways that enclose it. The only exception, the horse barn (#7), stands somewhat apart from the Common's northwest corner and across the road from the Carroll House (#6). The buildings are spaced varying distances apart along the north and west sides of the Common while Maplewood Cemetery adjoins the south side.

Despite the small number of buildings in the historic district, only two share the same type (house). There exist five different functional types of buildings: house, barn, church, shed, and school. The Common and the cemetery contribute additional variety of landscape types.

These buildings share similar scale, forms, materials, and colors. The scale is residential despite the presence of the other building types; the Keyes-Wright House (#5) surpasses the others in size. All, however, possess the gable form of roof and rectangular plans. The buildings share wood framing; among wall sheathing materials, clapboards are universal except for the metal siding on the town shed and the vinyl siding applied to part of the Keyes-Wright House. Roof sheathing consists of sheet metal on all of the main blocks. In exterior color, white predominates; four of the six buildings are now painted white while the other two (#s4 and 7) are red.

With one exception, the Carroll House (#6), the buildings in the historic district are generally in good-to-excellent condition. Three of the buildings - the Keyes-Wright House (#5), the former school (#4), and the horse barn (#7) - have been thoroughly rehabilitated since 1960. In 1989, the Union Church (#1) has received a matching grant from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation that will enable exterior painting, repair of the front steps, and inspection of the foundation and sills. The present owners of the adjacent Carroll House (#6) intend to rehabilitate that building in the near future.

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Descriptions follow of the buildings and cemetery in the historic district; the numbers are keyed to the accompanying sketch map.

1. Union Church; c. 1828 or 1836

Presenting its temple front to the Common, the one-story, three-by-three-bay, gable-roofed Union Church of rectangular plan displays the basic elements of vernacular Greek Revival style. Conflicting evidence exists regarding the year of its original construction, either c. 1828 or 1836. The present appearance of the church reflects "repairs" made in 1876.

The clapboarded building rests on a mortared rubble foundation that has been faced or replaced with concrete on the east and north sides. A wood water table with a drip cap encircles the building, and serves as base for the paneled corner pilasters. The pilasters, in turn, support a plain three-part entablature that follows both the horizontal and raking eaves. The roof is now sheathed with standing-seam metal in place of the original wood shingles.

The main (east) gable facade possesses twin entrances placed in the side bays. Each single-leaf door with six raised panels is enframed by a stepped-out plain surround below a molded cornice cap. The doors are approached by individual two-riser concrete platform steps; these steps replaced the previous plank platform with end steps that spanned nearly the entire facade. The central bay is occupied by a nine-over-nine sash with plain surround below a simple entablature; the upper half of the window is shielded by a louvered wood shutter while the shutters for the lower half are left open. A goose-neck metal light fixture is attached to the wall directly above the window. The horizontal eaves entablature returns across this facade to enclose the pediment with a blind clapboarded tympanum.

The matching side (north and south) eaves facades are lighted by three regularly spaced bays of windows identical to that on the main facade. Each group of windows is offset somewhat toward the west end of each facade, reflecting the interior position of the auditorium; the entrance vestibule lacks windows on these facades. The rear (west) facade contrasts by being blank, and possesses only short horizontal returns of the eaves entablature. An exterior brick chimney bisects this facade, culminating in a corbeled cap.

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The interior of the church is partitioned into a shallow entrance vestibule with a low ceiling and the auditorium occupying most of the interior space. Three doorways lead from the vestibule into the auditorium; double-leaf, four-panel doors are aligned with the central longitudinal aisle of the auditorium and flanked by single-leaf doors corresponding in position to the exterior doors. Freestanding wood pews occupy the main floor on each side of the aisle. A raised wood platform extends the entire width of the auditorium's west end. The left third of the platform is enclosed by a paneled, pilastered railing that curves toward a central recession in the platform. A small nineteenth-century organ made by the Estey Organ Co. of Brattleboro, Vermont stands behind the railing. A small wood lectern and altar table are aligned with the central aisle, flanked by wood choir pews on the right third of the platform. The window and door openings are crowned by cornice caps. Suspended from the center of the ceiling, an elaborate six-lamp metal chandelier of Victorian style has been adapted from oil to electricity.

2. Town Shed/Garage; c. 1930 (rebuilt from horse shed?)

Diagonally facing the Common, this vernacular shed stands adjacent to the south facade of the Union Church (#1) at the northwest edge of Maplewood Cemetery (#3). The one-story building of elongated rectangular plan rests on a rubble foundation mostly faced with concrete and carries a shallow-pitched roof with a short front slope and longer rear slope. The walls are sheathed with sheet metal pressed to simulate clapboards; the sheet metal stops against wood corner and fascia boards. The roof is sheathed with corrugated metal and its rafter tails are exposed along the horizontal eaves.

The broad main (east) eaves facade retains in its left half one of the two original truck entrances. Double-leaf, matchboarded sliding doors are mounted on an exterior metal track that formerly extended the entire width of this facade. The right vehicle entrance has been infilled with clapboards around a central four-panel pass door flanked closely by an eight-light horizontal window on each side. The south side facade is lighted by two bays of four-light fixed windows, and a flushboarded pass door enters the right corner.

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This building stands on the site of the horse shed associated with the adjacent Union Church (#1). Constructed in 1837, the elongated one-story shed carried a wood-shingled gable roof, and its east eaves front was marked by multiple full-bay openings. The orientation and scale of the present shed match those of the horse shed, indicating that this building may have been reconstructed from its predecessor. In 1969, the right half of the building was adapted to contain a small public library serving Stockbridge Common and vicinity.

3. Maplewood Cemetery

Flanking the south side of the Common, Maplewood Cemetery occupies a rectangular, mostly flat area that slopes gently downward at the west end (a section developed in recent decades). A row of namesake mature maple trees defines the north side of the cemetery fronting the Common; maples and other deciduous trees bound the south side along a downward sloping bank. A few decorative shrubs are scattered among the headstones.

The cemetery contains a variety of slate, marble, and granite headstones predominantly of modest dimensions and simple design. The slate stones are both the oldest and the fewest in number, the earliest dating from 1789. Near the center of the historic section of the cemetery stands a distinctive cast-iron fountain painted in a polychromatic manner. The fountain consists of circular basin standing on short legs and rimmed by a flange embossed with frogs, flowers, and leaves. Rising from an oval base at the center of the basin are the long-stemmed flowers and leaves of the calla lily surrounding the fluted central water pipe. The fountain is not watered at present (1989).

A modern chain-link fence encloses the north and east sides of the cemetery, incorporating six double-leaf, hinged gates along the north side next to the gravel driveway that separates the cemetery and the Common. This metal fence replaced a nineteenth-century wood picket fence incorporating a northeast front gate with raised piers supporting a round arch.

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4. Stockbridge Common School; 1884

Sited across the road from the northeast side of the Common, the former District No. 1 schoolhouse is oriented diagonally to the curving road on a southeast-northwest axis. The one-and-one-half-story, one-by-four-bay, gable-front vernacular building of rectangular plan displays a modest blend of Greek Revival and Italianate decorative features. The building ceased being used as a school in 1956, and was somewhat altered by conversion to a residence in 1980.

Resting on a low mortared-rubble foundation, the building is sheathed with clapboards and its roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. A wood water table with molded upper edge encircles the building. Plain pilasters ascend the corners to support a frieze and molded cornice (with returns) following the eaves. An exposed bell is mounted in a metal frame near the west end of the ridge. An interior brick chimney rises from the east end of the ridge.

The main (west) facade possesses a central entrance with a six-panel door surmounted by a three-light transom and flanked by stepped-out plain pilasters. The pilasters support a friezeband below the hip-roofed, Italianate door hood with molded cornice; the hood is supported by scrolled and incised brackets. Centered above the hood is a rectangular wood sign lettered "Stockbridge Common School." The gable is punctuated by two fixed six-light windows with plain surrounds that were added during the residential conversion.

The south eaves facade is lighted by four bays of modern one-over-one sash with snap-in, six-over-six dividers. Each window has a footed sill, plain surround, and cornice cap. The present windows restore the arrangement of the six-over-six sash original to the building; during the first half of this century, additional windows were installed between the present openings to provide more light for the classroom. The fenestration of the opposite (north) facade differs by the presence of a large plate-glass window in the left half. This modern window marks the position of a one-story, one-bay-deep, shed-roofed wing (probably containing toilets) that has been removed.

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5. Keyes-Wright House; 1786-87, completed c. 1804

Facing the north side of the Common from its site across the road, this massive vernacular Federal style house of Georgian plan stands oriented with its gable roof parallel to the road. The two-and-one-half-story, five-by-five-bay house rests on a stone foundation. The south and west facades retain their original clapboard sheathing and corner boards while the east and north facades have been overlaid with vinyl siding. A friezeband and molded cornice follow the south horizontal eaves and continue (with short cornice returns) along the west raking eaves; only the cornice (plus short returns) remains exposed on the east raking and north horizontal eaves. The expansive gable roof is sheathed with standing-seam metal. Two interior chimneys emerge from the south slope at the ridge; each has been rebuilt with corbel tables and a concrete-slab cap.

The main (south) eaves facade is arranged symmetrically around a central entrance. The entrance ensemble incorporates a six-panel door flanked by half-length, six-pane sidelights and enframed by stepped-out plain pilasters supporting a three-part entablature. Aside from the single bay above the entrance, the window bays are paired on both stories; the openings are now fitted with six-over-six sash and have plain surrounds. Hinged, louvered shutters are mounted at each window.

The five-bay east gable facade differs slightly in its arrangement. The first story possesses a central entrance but its four-panel door has only a plain surround and six-light transom. The window bays on the right side are closely paired while the others on this facade, including two bays in the gable, are spaced farther apart. The opposite (west) facade has a more irregular arrangement with five window bays on the first story and four on the second; only the right pairs are aligned vertically.

Constructed in 1959 to replace a deteriorated counterpart, a one-story, gable-roofed ell projects from the rear (north) facade of the main block. The clapboarded ell rests on a concrete foundation, and its roof is wood-shingled. A central louvered cupola of square plan straddles the ridge, its bellcast pyramidal roof being wood-shingled and carrying a metal weathervane in the form of a horse.

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The ell's east eaves facade is recessed behind a four-bay arcade with square columns and segmental-arched openings. The north half of the ell contains a garage whose three vehicle bays are entered by paneled overhead doors. The original ell's east facade differed by having at least three semielliptical-arched, open carriage bays.

The interior of the house has been somewhat altered during the course of its existence. Several changes were made to the original Georgian plan during the 1860s when the house was adapted to a boarding house under the ownership of Mrs. Justin Morgan. Probably the most substantial involved the subdivision of the second-floor hall into small rooms. Excepting a bathroom installed in the hall's north end, these partitions were removed during the rehabilitation of the house undertaken by the present owners in 1959.

The first-story southwest parlor exhibits the most elaborate original or historic decoration in the house. Only this room possesses four-panel sliding wood shutters at the windows. Its north interior wall is sheathed with paneled woodwork around the four-panel doors and a fireplace whose firebox opening is flanked by paneled pilasters supporting a frieze and molded mantel. Horizontal flushboard wainscoting with a molded cap rail sheathes the lower walls above a molded baseboard. The upper walls are plastered on the east, south, and west sides of the room, and the corner posts are partly exposed. The door and window openings are enframed by molded surrounds.

The center hall and other first-story rooms - the southeast parlor, northeast dining room, and northwest music room - display plainer finishes incorporating wainscoting, molded surrounds, and four-panel doors. The southeast parlor differs from the other rooms by having a blind mantelpiece instead of a fireplace (probably the result of the installation of a stove). In the rear ell, the kitchen retains the original massive brick cooking fireplace together with a beehive side oven; this chimney has been freestanding within the room since the reconstruction of the ell in 1959.

Until its removal in 1960 owing to deteriorated condition, a substantial barn apparently of English type stood to the rear (north) of the house. The one-and-one-half-story, flushboarded, gable-roofed barn was oriented parallel to the house's ell, and possessed a central wagon entrance on its east eaves front.

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6. Carroll House; c. 1835

Set back somewhat from the west edge of the Common, this modest vernacular house stands between the Union Church (#1) and the road. The one-and-one-half-story, two-by-two-bay, gable-roofed main block stands oriented parallel to the road but now lacks an entrance. A similar-scale, gabled south ell projects five more closely spaced bays in length, its east eaves facade being flush with the east gable facade of the main block. The present main entrance occurs at the joint between the two blocks. The house is now (1989) in fair condition, awaiting a planned substantial rehabilitation.

The main block rests on a foundation mostly rebuilt in concrete block while the ell's foundation is rubble faced with concrete. The house has a post-and-beam frame and is sheathed with clapboards stopped by corner boards. The boxed cornice lacks returns. The roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal.

The somewhat irregular fenestration includes two-over-two sash with plain surrounds on the main block and east facade of the ell. The main entrance has a replacement door with a large light and four horizontal panels; a simple cornice crowns the opening. A secondary entrance in the second bay from the left (south) end of the ell now has a modern metal door. Two eight-light horizontal windows punctuate the ell's east kneewall. The three-bay opposite (west) facade of the ell differs by having a twelve-over-twelve sash in the center bay, an eight-over-eight sash in the right bay, and a left-bay entrance that now lacks a door. The shadow of a former full-length, shed-roofed porch remains on the wall.

The south gable facade of the ell displays the shadow of a former one-story, one-bay, shed-roofed wing. Formerly connected in turn to the south end of the shed wing was a small one-and-one-half-story, flushboarded, gabled carriage barn with a vehicle entrance on its partly exposed north gable front. Both the shed wing and the barn were removed during the latter 1940s.

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7. Horse Barn; c. 1850

Standing across the road from the Carroll House (#6), this small horse barn probably was historically associated with that house. Since c. 1960, however, the barn has belonged with the Keyes-Wright House (#5) property.

The one-and-one-half-story, two-by-two-bay, gable-front horse barn rests on a fieldstone foundation. Its post-and-beam frame is sheathed with shiplap only on the main facade (replacing the previous boards-and-battens) and boards-and-battens on the other sides. The gable roof is covered with corrugated sheet metal.

The main (south) facade is entered on the right by a flushboarded door sliding on an exterior track; this door replaced a previous flushboarded interior sliding door inset with a six-light window. Centered on the upper level is a flushboarded, hinged loft door, and above that is another rectangular loft opening. The east eaves facade is lighted by two fixed six-pane windows while the opposite (west) facade has four-pane stall windows. The interior now contains two horse stalls on the left (west) side, and a hay loft on the upper level.

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The Stockbridge Common Historic District holds primary significance for representing a distinguishable entity, a nineteenth-century rural Vermont hamlet, whose components may lack individual distinction. Furthermore, there exist within the historic district buildings that embody the distinctive characteristics of specific types and periods of construction; these include the late eighteenth-century Keyes-Wright House (#5) of vernacular Federal style and Georgian plan, the c. 1830 Union Church (#1) of vernacular Greek Revival style, and a one-room school (#4) built in 1884 with late Greek Revival features. The historic district gains additional local significance for its association with the lives of Elias Keyes, who played a prominent role in the initial eighteenth-century settlement and development of Stockbridge, and of members of the Morgan family, who raised the famous Morgan horses while owning the Keyes farm during the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

The hamlet of Stockbridge Common compares with several other small villages that emerged during the early settlement of Vermont in the late eighteenth century but gradually atrophied during the latter nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These villages share the characteristic of being sited on hills and therefore isolated both from sources of water power and from the principal transport routes that developed generally along the river valleys, especially after the introduction of railroads during the middle nineteenth century. Generally other villages were developed in the valleys of the same townships, and those superseded the so-called hill villages especially in commercial and industrial importance. In the town of Stockbridge, the dominant village of Gaysville emerged around relatively large mills at the major site of water power on the White River about five miles from Stockbridge Common; the main highway and, for a quarter century, a railroad passed through Gaysville (whose primacy and physical being were nearly destroyed by a cataclysmic flood in 1927). Like some of the other hill villages in the state, Stockbridge Common has been reduced to a skeleton of its physical extent and activity at the height of its development.

The period of significance for the historic district begins with the construction in 1786-87 of the Keyes-Wright House (#5), the earliest extant building on the site of the present hamlet. The Union Church (#1) was erected next, between 1828 and 1836, among the surviving buildings. The adjacent Carroll House (#6) is probably contemporary with the church although it is most closely associated with Charles Carroll, its owner during at least the

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1860s and 1870s. Only the former school (#4) represents the latter half of the nineteenth century; by its construction in 1884, the hamlet had already begun to decline. The period of significance concludes c. 1930 when the last building (the town shed, #2) was completed.

Although the town of Stockbridge was chartered in 1761, the first permanent settlement within its borders did not occur until nearly a quarter-century later. Several families, including that of Elias Keyes (who was born in Connecticut in 1757), arrived during 1784-85. In May of the latter year, the proprietors of Stockbridge granted Keyes 400 acres of land of his choice encompassing a mill site on the Tweed River just upstream from its confluence with the larger White River. The grant was conditioned on the requirement that Keyes should build saw and grist mills on the site within one year, and he proceeded to accomplish the required tasks.

Keyes' choice of land included the terrace above the White River where the hamlet of Stockbridge Common later emerged and from which he could overlook the mill site to the south. The road past the future Common was laid out in 1786, and the road survey of that year refers to the large house being built by Keyes. The substantial two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed house (#5) of vernacular Federal style and Georgian plan apparently proved a more formidable if not more costly project than Keyes anticipated. He did not lack some financial means, engaging both in the successful operation of the mills and in numerous land transactions. Keyes taught the first school in Stockbridge, and donated to the town the land in front of his house for a public common and cemetery. Nevertheless he did not complete the house prior to its foreclosure in February, 1804 to satisfy a debt owed to one Elkanah Stevens. Keyes lost most of his property by an adverse decision in litigation, and he was sent to the county jail for failure to repay his debts.

In December, 1804, Stevens conveyed to Seth Wright of Boston "a parcel of land containing about two acres lying North of the Common in Stockbridge with a large house partly finished standing thereon." It is not definitely known how much or what part of the house remained for Wright to complete; one theory holds that Keyes finished only the first story and that the second story was completed later, presumably by Wright. The latter's ownership lasted until 1814 when Wright sold the house to Dr. Timothy P. Fay, a prosperous local physician.

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Elias Keyes, meanwhile, redeemed himself to the extent that he was elected a judge of the Windsor County court. During the period between 1793 and 1825 (both before and after his financial failure), he represented Stockbridge in the Vermont Legislature for a total of fourteen years. He recovered some of his property in Stockbridge, including the mills near where he lived until his death in 1844.

The hamlet of Stockbridge Common labored under one intrinsic disadvantage that impeded its nineteenth-century development. Not being situated next to the White or Tweed Rivers meant that the hamlet could never attract industry dependent on hydromechanical power. Another location in Stockbridge township, however, did offer that advantage, and the village of Gaysville emerged at the so-called "Great Narrows" of the White River about five miles downstream. Beginning in 1832, a series of substantial manufacturing enterprises developed there. The largest was the five-story, brick mill with Italianate stylistic features that was erected in 1860 for the manufacture of woolen cloth. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1888 but, three years later, a button factory was opened and it lasted until about 1900. Employing 75 or more persons, these enterprises dominated Stockbridge's economic activity and undoubtedly attracted residents away from the Common hamlet. (Ironically, Gaysville's nineteenth-century advantage turned into its twentieth-century undoing; the cataclysmic flood of 1927 decimated the village and it has never recovered.)

Like many other rural Vermont towns, the population of Stockbridge increased rather rapidly during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and reached an historical maximum prior to 1850. The 1810 census of Stockbridge recorded 700 residents; the 1820 figure was 964; and by 1830 it was 1333. The peak occurred in 1840 when the population was 1419. Despite the advent of larger-scale industrial enterprise in Gaysville, the township's population had begun to decline by 1850 and it decreased to 1124 by 1880.

Given the large size of his original land grant, Elias Keyes' house probably stood by itself on the terrace above the valley until the early nineteenth century. The increasing population in the vicinity, however, brought a need for a local meeting house. In March, 1828, Keyes himself leased for \$10.00 by indenture to the "Union Meeting House Society in Stockbridge" a small piece

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of land in front of his former house (then owned by Dr. Fay, who witnessed the indenture). The document refers to "a certain piece of land lying on the north end of the common so-called in said Stockbridge being the same on which stands a new meeting house belonging to [the] society...." The society was formed in 1827 after Stockbridge residents withdrew from an earlier union society in the adjoining township of Pittsfield.

The reference to the "new meeting house" appears to confirm the date of its construction. Other sources, however, give the date as 1836. The vernacular Greek Revival style of the present Union Church (#1) strongly indicates the latter date, if not a later renovation during which the paneled corner pilasters, eaves entablature, and gable pediment may have been added to the building.

The intent of the indenture document was "to convey so much [land] as shall accommodate the said society in getting to and from the house and on which they may build a suitable number of horse sheds for the convenience of the society while attending meetings at the house...." The elongated one-story, gable-roofed horse sheds were constructed in 1837, oriented diagonally to the south side of the church.

Ownership of the Keyes-Wright House changed again in 1832 when Justin Morgan II acquired the property from Dr. Fay, thereby beginning the longest term (60 years) of family possession in its history. Morgan was the son of the Justin Morgan (a resident of Randolph, Vt.) who owned the horse that became famous as his namesake and the progenitor of the highly esteemed breed. Justin Morgan II settled into the Keyes-Wright House, started a store, and pursued the breeding of Morgan horses. He may have built for the latter purpose the barn that remained standing behind the house until 1960.

Justin Morgan II apparently resided in Stockbridge for several years prior to acquiring the Keyes-Wright House. By 1828, he was a local justice of the peace and witnessed the indenture between Elias Keyes and the Union Meeting House Society. Five years later, in 1833, he served the same role in the transfer of a small lot from Almon Durkee to John Forest. Lying west of the Common, this lot is possibly the site of the modest vernacular house (#6) that stands adjacent to the church.

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After Justin Morgan II's death in 1853, his wife, Sally Durkee Morgan, adapted the Keyes-Wright House into a boarding house or inn, probably out of necessity for income to support the large building. Various modifications were made to the interior, including the partitioning of the second-floor center hall into two additional rooms. In 1869, Sally conveyed the house to her son, Harvey D. Morgan, who had married the daughter of Dr. Timothy Fay. Harvey Morgan operated the store at the lower crossroads, and lived in a house that was constructed for him across the road. Apparently he continued to operate the farm; Child's Gazetteer and Business Directory of 1884 describes him as "postmaster, trustee surplus fund, general merchant, and farmer" who owned 200 acres, and also lists George L. Walker as "farmer for H. D. Morgan." After Harvey's death in 1886, his wife, Emily D., retained ownership of the Keyes-Wright House until 1892.

Stockbridge Common's situation on the terrace above the valley floor proved a disadvantage for transport, which increasingly followed the easier grades of the valley road bypassing the Common. The Beers atlas of 1869 shows that the Common hamlet was losing activity to the crossroads at the foot of so-called Clay Hill to the south. The post office had been moved from the Common to Harvey Morgan's store, one of the two stores and a hotel occupying corners of that intersection. The presence of these enterprises indicates that the crossroads had become the commercial focus for this part of the township.

At the Common, a small store existed next to the east of the Keyes-Wright House (then owned by Mrs. Justin Morgan II). This one-and-one-half-story, clapboarded, gable-roofed building stood parallel to the road, repeating the eaves-front orientation of the Keyes-Wright House next door. A daguerrotype made probably c. 1860 shows a sign bearing the name "J. B. Rogers & Co." (Josiah Rogers married Elizabeth, the sister of Harvey D., Justin III, Charles, and Azro B. Morgan) over the off-center entrance; another sign over the left window bay reads "A. B. Morgan." Later used as a house (owned by E. S. Burnham during the 1880s), this building was removed c. 1910.

Three other buildings also flanked the Common in 1869, two of which were removed during the twentieth century. Next to the east of the small store stood a building (marked by a large symbol) belonging to E. G. Butterfield that was also known as the "Tontine;" this may have been the first tavern in Stockbridge township. On the west side of the Keyes-Wright House was a

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smaller house belonging to W. Chamberlain, presumably William A., a farm laborer; this one-and-one-half-story, clapboarded, gable-roofed house also repeated the eaves-front orientation of the adjacent buildings. The presently (1989) extant house next to the church was then owned by C. Carroll, presumably Charles S., a wheelwright and farmer. The church was already labeled as the "Old Union Church," indicating possibly its declining usage rather than its forty years of age. On the east side of the cemetery, the map shows a small house owned by A. [Abel] Whitcomb, a farmer who then lived at the lower crossroads; during the 1830s, this house was unoccupied and used for hay storage, and it was later removed (possibly for an expansion of the cemetery). The District No. 1 school then (1869) stood a short distance west of the Common on the north side of the road.

By 1876, the church had apparently fallen into disrepair. Several meetings were held during the spring of that year to consider the repair or replacement of the building. The decision was made to repair, and the work was performed during the latter half of the same year; the slips (pews) were sold to raise the necessary funds. Following the completion of the repairs, the church was rededicated in February, 1877. Three religious denominations - the Congregationalists, Universalists, and Methodists - then held interests in the church, and a director was elected to represent each society in the management of the church's affairs. Enos Chandler was chosen director of the Congregational Society but he was succeeded in 1878 by Harvey Morgan. James Baker was then director of the Universalists, and James Bent of the Methodists. Also in 1876, the Ladies' Union Aid Society was organized; this group would outlive the individual denominations and become the owner of the church during the twentieth century.

A new building, and the next-to-last constructed of the presently extant buildings, appeared next to the Common in 1884. The new District No. 1 schoolhouse (#4) was erected during the fall of that year but not without contention among the taxpayers of the district. A board found in the building bears a message from the Building Committee, whose efforts were "opposed by the Wealthiest men in the District, H. D. Morgan, Ebenezer Woolcutt, favored by all the poor people." The need for the replacement is evident from the same message: "the old school house a mere rack unfit to keep cattle or hogs in. No man living that ever paid a tax to build the old school House." Although constructed a half-century after the church, the schoolhouse displays similar vernacular

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Greek Revival character. A gesture toward more contemporary design appears over the front door in the form of an Italianate hood that represents the latest architectural style evident among Stockbridge Common's buildings.

Seven years after the completion of the new schoolhouse, the Common received another public improvement. The grounds of Maplewood Cemetery were expanded in the fall of 1891. The enlarged area was enclosed by a new fence, probably the wood picket fence with round-arched gate(s) that was later replaced by the present chain-link version.

The onset of the twentieth century was marked in the upper White River valley by the construction of one of the last railroads built in Vermont. The White River Valley Railroad extended nineteen miles from a junction with the Central Vermont Railway's main line at Bethel to the northern terminus of Rochester. The track was laid only to Gaysville when the company went bankrupt. After the valley towns provided grants, including \$10,000 from Stockbridge, the line was completed and opened for service in December, 1900. The railroad passed through the vicinity of Stockbridge Common across the river from the lower crossroads. Its effect on the Common hamlet was probably limited to the improvement in passenger travel compared with the stage coaches that previously traversed the valley.

More repairs were made to the church in 1899. The Ladies' Aid Society took the initiative for the work, which included painting of both the exterior and interior, repair of the shutters, and replacement of the front steps. Nevertheless, the church continued to contract in membership and activity. Regular services apparently ceased after the death in 1905 of Rev. Thomas S. Hubbard, a Congregationalist who had served many years as pastor (he resided in the Keyes-Wright House, and had been Stockbridge school superintendent as early as 1860). An Old Home Celebration held during the summer became the principal event of the year, attracting both current and former Stockbridge residents. The Ladies' Aid Society assumed responsibility for the church building, having electricity installed in 1921. Two years later, the Society formally became "the custodian of the Union Church and its affairs."

The curves and relatively steep grades of the road through Stockbridge Common from the valley must have made it increasingly undesirable with the rising numbers of automobiles - and their

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accelerating speed - during the early twentieth century. The so-called Dugway along the valley floor became the favored route for through traffic, and the Common was effectively bypassed. This road later became the state highway, Route 100. The shift of traffic undoubtedly played a major role in the decline of activity and development around the Common.

The improvement of roads and the rapid increase in motor vehicle usage combined with the Great Depression to cause the ultimate demise of the White River Valley Railroad. The flood of 1927, however, nearly achieved the same result. The track paralleled the river along virtually the entire route and was extensively damaged by the flood. A public subscription of \$160,000 enabled the reconstruction of the line but it reopened for service only months before the financial collapse of 1929. The traffic never returned to former levels, and the last train made its trip along what was known locally as the "Peavine line" in April, 1932.

A more fundamental reason for the decline of the Common hamlet is the decrease in population of Stockbridge township that continued into the third quarter of the present century. The 1900 census recorded 822 inhabitants compared to the historical maximum of 1419 in 1840, and the number dropped steadily with subsequent censuses. Only 460 by 1930, the population shrank to 389 in 1970, the latter figure being barely half the corresponding figure for 1810.

Usage of the church dwindled to the point that it was closed during the winter months. Summer services were conducted by ministers of the three denominations from nearby towns or elsewhere. In 1941, the building was repaired and painted again. Since then, the Ladies' Aid Society has continued to maintain the church although services are limited to occasional weddings, funerals, or other special events.

Whatever the causes, the present century brought a gradual reduction in the number of standing buildings around the Common. The small store next to the Keyes-Wright House was removed c. 1910, and the adjacent Tontine along with its barn followed in 1931. The church's horse sheds were removed probably during the 1930s, and the present town shed was built (or possibly rebuilt from the sheds) on the site adjoining the cemetery. The most recent removal, involving the house next to the west of the Keyes-Wright House, occurred in 1964. As if to confirm the decline of the Common hamlet, the District No. 1 school was

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closed in June, 1956, in favor of a new consolidated school elsewhere in Stockbridge township.

After the Morgan family's tenure ended in 1892, the Keyes-Wright House passed through several ownerships, and was allowed to deteriorate during the Depression era. In 1959, the present owners, James and Robyn Wright, acquired the property. They proceeded to give the main block of the house a thorough rehabilitation; the rear ell, however, had degenerated to the point that it collapsed during the project and was entirely replaced. The adjacent barn was in similar condition and was taken down at the same time. In 1960, the Wrights also purchased the abandoned schoolhouse and, two decades later, adapted it sympathetically to residential use. Recently the same owners have acquired the Carroll House next to the church, and are now (1989) preparing to rehabilitate it. The small barn (#7) across the road shelters the Morgan horses being raised by the Wrights, who have revived the practice of the Morgan family.

The twentieth-century demolitions at Stockbridge Common have reduced the hamlet to its nineteenth-century physical extent, although the surviving buildings represent a longer chronological period. The historic district nonetheless conveys a strong sense of architectural and historic cohesiveness. The vernacular Federal and Greek Revival design shared by most of the buildings, the commonality of materials and forms, the lack of modern intrusions, and the pastoral nature of the hamlet's setting contribute most importantly to this sense of cohesiveness. Furthermore, the continued rehabilitation of the individual buildings will preserve both their historic character and future viability. Stockbridge Common retains to an extraordinary degree the appearance and feeling of a diminutive nineteenth-century Vermont hill village, an architectural environment now on the verge of extinction in the rapidly changing state.

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Photographs (latter 19th century to present) in the collection of James and Robyn Wright, Stockbridge Common, Vt.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Stockbridge Common Historic District begins at a Point A located at the intersection of the westerly edge of the Town Highway 11 right-of-way and a stone wall located about 570 feet northerly of the intersection between Town Highways 11 and 3; thence the boundary follows said stone wall 520 feet in a northwesterly direction to a Point B located at its intersection with a roughly perpendicular stone wall extending in a southwesterly direction; thence the boundary turns southwesterly and follows the latter stone wall 450 feet to the northerly edge of the Town Highway 3 right-of-way and continues in an extension of that line across said right-of-way to a Point C located at its intersection with the southerly edge of said right-of-way; thence the boundary turns northwesterly and follows the southerly edge of said right-of-way 60 feet to a Point D located at its intersection with a stone wall extending in a southwesterly direction; thence the boundary turns southwesterly and follows said stone wall 215 feet to a Point E located at its intersection with a stone wall extending in a northwesterly direction; thence the boundary turns northwesterly and follows said stone wall (and property line of Maplewood Cemetery) 390 feet to a Point F located at the northwest property corner of said cemetery; thence the boundary turns southwesterly and follows the westerly property line of Maplewood Cemetery 450 feet to a Point G located at the southwest property corner of said cemetery; thence the boundary turns southeasterly and follows the southerly property line of said cemetery a total of 1145 feet to a Point H located at the southeast property corner of said cemetery; thence the boundary turns northeasterly and follows the easterly property line of said cemetery 210 feet to a Point I located at the northeast property corner of said cemetery; thence the boundary turns easterly and follows the southerly edge of the driveway along the south side of the Common about 120 feet to a Point J located at its intersection with a southerly extension across both the driveway and the Town Highway 3 right-of-way of a line along the westerly edge of the Town Highway 11 right-of-way; thence the boundary turns northerly and follows said extension and line, crossing both the driveway and the Town Highway 3 right-of-way and continuing along the westerly edge of the Town Highway 11 right-of-way about 570 feet to Point A, the point of beginning.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the Stockbridge Common Historic District encompasses the namesake Common together with the buildings and cemetery that constitute the hamlet surrounding the Common. The boundary encloses the entire area of Maplewood Cemetery (#3) and the entire lots historically associated with the Union Church (#1), the Stockbridge Common School (#4), and the Carroll House (#6). Additionally the boundary includes a portion of the land associated with the Keyes-Wright House (#5) and defined by stone walls to the north and west of the house; Town Highway 11 serves as a visual edge along the east side of this land. A relatively steep, downward-sloping bank delimits the south side of the cemetery (and historic district). Outside the east and west portions of the boundary, there occurs diminution in the historic integrity of the built environment and loss of direct association with the Common itself.

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PROPERTY OWNERS

- 1, 2. Ladies' Aid Society of Stockbridge Union Meeting House
c/o (Mrs.) Ramona Blackmer
RFD 2
Bethel, Vermont 05032

3. Town of Stockbridge
P. O. Box 39
Stockbridge, Vermont 05772

- 4, 5, 6, 7. James W. and Robyn C. Wright
Heritage Farm
RFD 2
Bethel, Vermont 05032

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The following information repeats for all photographs except where noted:

Stockbridge Common Historic District
Stockbridge, Vermont
Credit: Hugh H. Henry
Negative filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph 1
Date: April 1989
Description: Overview of Common with Union Church (#1), Keyes-Wright House (#5), and school (#4); view looking northwest.

Photograph 2
Date: May 1988
Description: Common-scape (#2 on left, #1, #6, #7, #5 on right); view looking west.

Photograph 3
Credit: photographer unknown
Date: c. 1920
Description: Common-scape (#1 on left, #6, #5 on right); view looking northwest.

Photograph 4
Date: May 1988
Description: Union Church (#1) - south, east facades; view looking north.

Photograph 5
Date: April 1989
Description: Union Church (#1) - interior of auditorium; view looking west.

Photograph 6
Date: May 1988
Description: Stockbridge Town Shed (#2) - south, east facades; view looking west.

Photograph 7
Date: May 1988
Description: Maplewood Cemetery (#3) - north front; view looking south.

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Photograph 8
Date: May 1988
Description: Maplewood Cemetery (#3) - water fountain; view looking north.

Photograph 9
Date: April 1989
Description: Stockbridge Common School (#4) - west, south facades; view looking east.

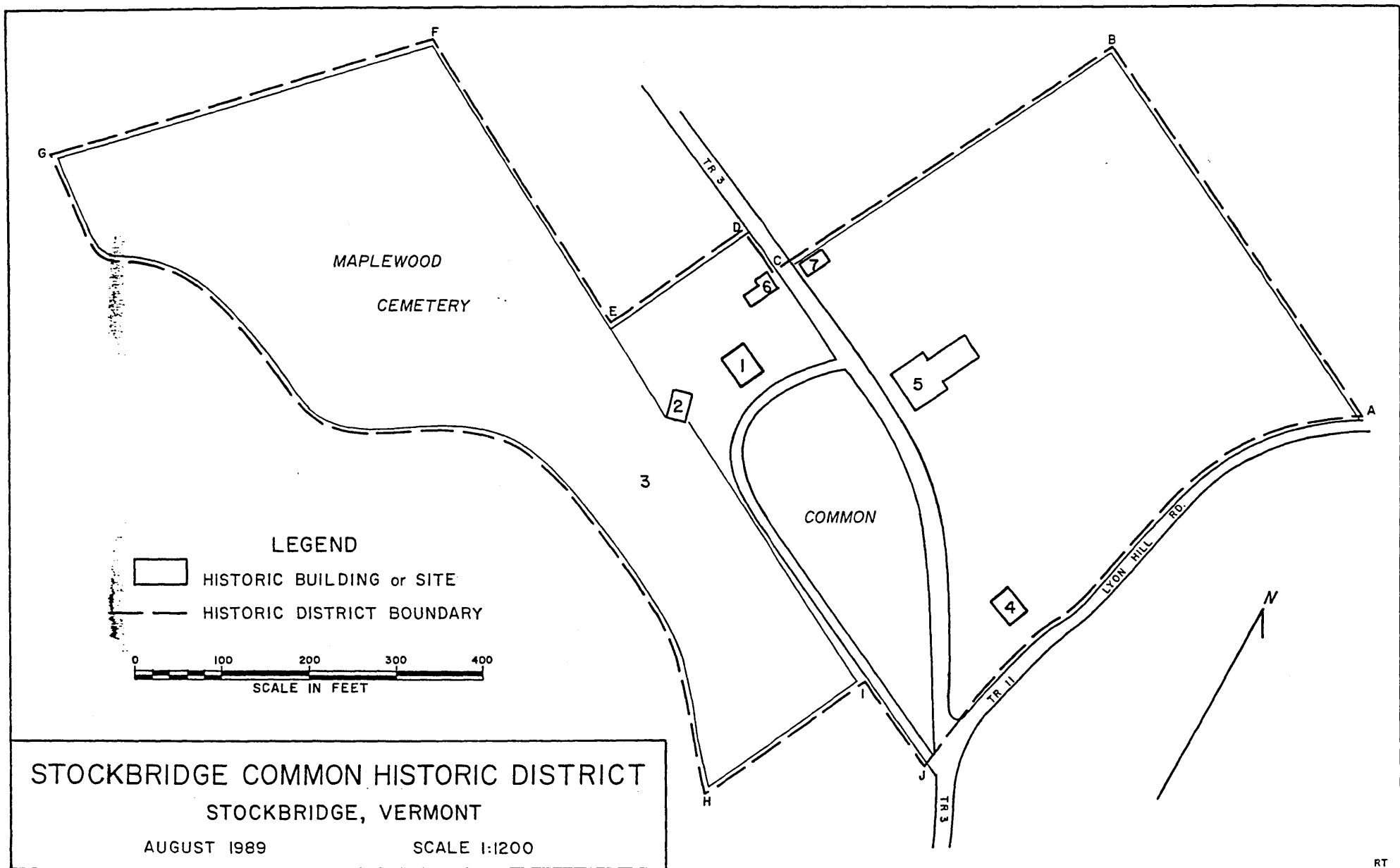
Photograph 10
Date: May 1988
Description: Keyes-Wright House (#5) - south, east facades; view looking north.

Photograph 11
Date: April 1989
Description: Keyes-Wright House (#5) - west, south facades; view looking northeast.

Photograph 12
Date: April 1989
Description: Keyes-Wright House (#5) - main entry on south facade; view looking north.

Photograph 13
Date: May 1988
Description: Carroll House (#6) - east, north facades; view looking west.

Photograph 14
Date: May 1988
Description: Horse barn (#7) - south, east facades; view looking north.



STOCKBRIDGE COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT

STOCKBRIDGE, VERMONT

AUGUST 1989

SCALE 1:1200