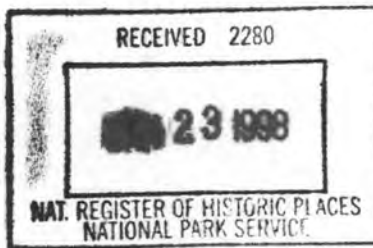


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stetson-Ford House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 2 Meadow Farms Way n/a not for Publication

city or town Norwell N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Plymouth code 023 zip code 02061

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

1/20/98  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick Andrews

Date of Action

3/9/98

Stetson-Ford House  
Name of Property

Plymouth, Massachusetts  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
6	0	sites
2	0	structures
2	4	objects
11	5	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC; single dwelling  
RECREATION AND CULTURE; outdoor recreation  
EDUCATION; museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: Postmedieval English  
COLONIAL: Georgian  
EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: granite  
walls WOOD: weatherboard, shingle  
roof ASPHALT  
other CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

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

(See continuation sheet)

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Norwell (Plymouth County)  
Massachusetts

## 7. DESCRIPTION

The Stetson-Ford House is an outstanding example of a stylish early rural Massachusetts farm-house. Having grown through at least two building stages from what may have been as early as ca. 1674 to 1785, its appearance today is that of a classic center-chimney, 2 1/2-story house of the 1780s: five-by-two-bays, with a one-story rear ell and a formal pedimented "porch", or vestibule. The house is clad in a combination of new clapboards and shingles, has an asphalt-shingled roof, and stands on a fieldstone and granite-block foundation. Most of the many 6-over-9-sash windows of the upper part of the house date to the late 1700s; 12-over-12-sash windows on the west side and the first story of the facade are replacements for nineteenth-century 2-over-2's. Highly skilled carpentry is evident in the simple, yet well-proportioned exterior detail of the pedimented, pilastered entry, as well as in the transitional late-Georgian/early Federal woodwork of the interior. Evidence of First Period construction, including chamfered posts and beams, remains exposed in the northeast ell and in both stories of the main house. A rubble and concrete front step and east-side terrace were added to the main house in this century, during the Early Modern period. Although all the early outbuildings--a barn, woodhouse (workshop), corn barn, and privy--are no longer standing, portions of their fieldstone foundations remain. These remnants, together with a fieldstone well and the fieldstone walls that surrounded most of the farmstead, still lend a sense of farmyard atmosphere, and make a significant contribution to the character of the property. Several later site features--the remains of an early twentieth-century apple orchard and perennial garden, and a ca. 1940 fieldstone and concrete goldfish pond and outdoor fireplace/barbecue illustrate the lifestyles of later occupants of the house. Today, the Stetson-Ford House and its immediate surroundings are well-maintained as part of an ongoing program designed to preserve their considerable array of historic features, and to perpetuate on a small scale some aspects of farming in the raising of poultry and growing of vegetables.

The house faces south on a forty-foot rise, 200 yards above the salt marshes of the North River, which meanders northward along the east edge of the former "Hundred-Acre" Stetson farm. The farmstead is reached by an unpaved lane extending from the east end of Stetson Shrine Lane, where four historic farmhouses, three of them associated with the Stetson family and dating to 1678, 1708, and 1826, still stand. The lane winds east through the mixed deciduous and coniferous woods which, except for a cleared patch immediately around the Stetson-Ford farmstead, comprise the bulk of the ca. 150 acres of the former Stetson family property that is owned by the town of Norwell. Except for the presence of three modern house lots along the lane a fifth of a mile north of the house, and of Massachusetts Route 3, which cuts through Norwell six hundred feet to the southwest, the entire area surrounding the farmstead is still undeveloped.

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**Exterior description.** The 2 1/2-story main section of the Stetson-Ford House stands atop a full fieldstone basement, part of which connects with the massive stone base for the brick center chimney. The side-gabled roof, recently re-covered in asphalt shingles, was replaced after a fire in 1956. A flat multi-light skylight lies on the front face of the roof, just west of the chimney, which was also rebuilt above the roofline after the fire. The building was re-sided in the early 1990s, with clapboards on the south facade, and wood shingles on the other elevations. (The main house was formerly covered with clapboards at the first story, and wood shingles on the upper walls, with a wide horizontal trim board between.)

The facade is a symmetrical five-bay composition. The four windows that flank the center entry are twentieth-century 12-over-12-sash, with flat casings that lie flush with the siding. The five windows aligned above them at the second story are eighteenth-century 6-over-9-sash, mounted in projecting, molded enframements that extend up into a prominent bed molding along the top of the wall. The projecting entry porch has a triangular pediment and an asphalt roof. Each of its side walls has a large 9-over-9-sash original window above a small clapboarded section of wall. The wide sill board that trims the bottom of the main facade wall (much of it a recent replacement) continues forward onto the porch walls. The handsome door surround and entablature are typical of some of the simpler Georgian designs found in eighteenth-century builders' guides, with flat pilasters on unadorned plinths, and well-proportioned classical moldings in the cornice. The main door, presently covered by a vertical-board storm door with two glass lights, is of mid-nineteenth-century six-panel design, with applied moldings. A pair of glass panes take the place of the two long vertical panels in the door.

The west gable end of the main house reflects both the interior room arrangement and a few modern alterations. The building is two rooms deep at both first and second stories, with one large window in each room. Those windows are 12-over-12-sash replacements for large 2-over-2-sash that dated to the second half of the nineteenth century; the smaller 6-over-9-sash attic window under the gable appears to date to the eighteenth century. All the main windows on this side of the house have louvered shutters of nineteenth-century vintage; similar shutters for the other facades are presently stored on the property. A small 6-light casement window at the first story was added for a twentieth-century lavatory. At the northwest corner of the wall is a narrow "coffin doorway", with a flat surround, four-light transom, and molded horizontal canopy. The door itself is a twentieth-century multi-pane glass-and-wood type. Although the cornerboards of the house are largely intact, the rake trim along the gable roof line is a modern replacement, added after the 1956 fire. A recent embellishment above the northernmost first-story window is a carved wooden sign that reads "Stetson-Ford House".

The architectural trim elements of the east gable end are identical to those on the west, and another 6-over-9-sash attic window appears under the east gable. The two second-story windows on this elevation, however, are early 6-over-9-sash. The fenestration of the first story has been altered by the insertion of modern 12-over-12-sash in the front room, and a multi-light twentieth-century door, flanked by a pair of 15-light casement windows, in the rear part of the wall. At the rear northeast corner, lighting an interior stairway, is an early 9-over-9-sash window of similar proportions to those in the main facade entry.

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On the rear (north) elevation of the main house, another 9/9 sash window is positioned at the first story near the northwest house corner. A pair of 6/9 sash flanks the center of the upper rear wall, and three asymmetrically-placed modern 12/12 sash windows are positioned below them.

There is no evidence that Victorian or modern porches were added to the house, but a large early-twentieth-century rubble stone terrace abuts the east side of the main building. Except for its first long step, which has a tread adorned with colored concrete with incised designs, the floor of the terrace was resurfaced with new concrete during the past year.

The long 1 ½ story rear ell extends north from the northeast corner of the main house, with its east wall continuing the plane of the main house wall, and the inner end of its roof ridge meeting the main roof just under the rear cornice. The ell has undergone numerous alterations over time, including a twentieth-century rear extension just north over a former well, and an enlargement by several feet along most of the west side, resulting in the present "saltbox" profile. The ell has one entry in each elevation, each with a twentieth-century door and a flat-board casing. The west entry is in the original wall, now recessed under the extended roof, and has a large 9/9 sash window beside it. A 6-pane window appears high in the center of the outer west wall. The ell's north end has an entry in the northwest corner, and a 6/9 sash window in a projecting frame is located under the gable. The east side entry of the ell is located at the south end, with a 6/9 sash window to its north. A tall chimney shown rising from the west roof slope of the ell in historic photos has been removed.

In spite of its changes and additions, the exposed structure of the south part of the ell still supports the long-held belief that this part of the building dates to before 1725. According to tradition, it may have been built as early as the mid 1670s, as the first small house of Thomas Stetson after he acquired the Hundred Acre Farm from his father. The portion is of planked construction, with walls of ca. 1" thick vertical boards, mounted without studs on a heavy, chamfered timber frame.

**Interior description**

The interior of the south section of the ell is minimally finished, with most of the frame exposed and decorated with simple beveled chamfers. The whitewashed ceiling is supported by one wide bevel-chamfered beam on chamfered posts, and has unchamfered ca. 4" joists, spaced 29" on center.

The interior of the main part of the Stetson Ford House is an amalgam of primarily late-eighteenth century features combined with indications of pre-existing First Period or mid-century construction. Shipbuilder Michael Ford, who purchased the house and the 100 acre Stetson Farm in 1781, is identified on the deed as a housewright, and it was undoubtedly he who was responsible for updating the building to its present form, adding the late Georgian "porch," and executing the fine paneling, moldings, and other transitional Georgian/Federal detailing found throughout the house. (A small northeast second story bedroom and a twentieth-century bathroom and first-story lavatory are the main later alterations to the building's interior spaces - see Floor Plan.)

(continued)

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The house's traditional center-chimney, two-room-deep plan incorporates two large front rooms on each story flanking the center chimney stack and front "triple-run" stairs. A single open room spans the rear of the house at the first story (today laid out as a combined kitchen and living room). The original function of the center or this space was undoubtedly as a kitchen, and the location of the bake oven in the center of the back wall of its wide, deep fireplace indicates a construction date within the period of Stetson ownership, probably before 1750. Both walls and ceiling of this room are plastered, but much of the heavier parts of the frame, including three transverse ceiling beams and their supporting rear posts, are exposed in the manner of the First Period. All are decorated with beveled chamfers, which measure 7/8" wide on the beams and ca. 1/2" on the posts.

The front rooms at both first and second stories are all finished in a style consistent with the early 1780s in rural Plymouth County. The ceilings are plastered, and the corner posts are boxed, though flared at the top at the second story. Each of the four main front rooms has a small brick fireplace with a mantelpiece of simple, classically-detailed pilasters, frieze, and a molded mantel shelf. The mantel in the southeast first-story room has fluted pilasters; portions of the fireplace walls in the southwest first-story and both second-story rooms are covered with raised-field paneling. Raised field panels also fill the wall below the upper part of the staircase in the entry. Complex crown moldings and wainscoting with molded chair rails, (and in the case of the more formal southeast room, a fluted wainscot frieze) adorn the walls of the two first-story rooms and the entry. Throughout the main house are a mixture of doors and door hardware. The majority are late-eighteenth century raised-panel doors, of two-, three- and four-panel design, with Suffolk and Norfolk latches, and wrought-iron strap, butterfly, and H hinges. A four-panel door to the added northeast bedroom is of mid-nineteenth century date, with recessed panels and applied moldings. Of special note is an early vertical-board interior door at the entrance to the cellar, which still displays a strap hinge with pointed cusp, and leather washers on the hinge plate.

The rear part of the second story, though altered by the addition of the nineteenth-century bedroom and modern bathroom and closet, also displays some evidence of pre-1725 First Period construction. The corner post and west plate of the small northwest bedroom are both exposed and chamfered, as is a rear post in the back northeast hallway (see Floor Plan). An exposed portion of the rear plate near the northeast corner of the house also has a bevel-chamfered edge. A board forming part of the vertical wall sheathing of the chimney wall in the back hall even displays early First Period shadow molding, of the same profile as found on interior sheathing in the ca. 1637 Fairbanks House, Dedham, MA.

Much material in the attic and roof of the main house was replaced after the 1956 fire. Most of the roof structure, however, a principle-rafter, common purlin system with heavy, five-sided ridge beams, remains.

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**Archaeological Description**

While no prehistoric sites are presently recorded on the Stetson-Ford House property, sites may be present. Seven prehistoric sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics for the area also indicate several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) which have been found to be favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. The nominated property includes a well drained level to moderately sloping terrace in close proximity (within 1000 ft.) to wetlands. A small freshwater brook follows most of the southern and southwestern boundary of the nominated area then flows easterly to the North River. The estuarine zone of the North River is also in close proximity to the nominated parcel indicating the availability of resources related to a marine related ecosystem to inhabitants of this area. Given the above information and the size of the property (3 acres) a high potential exists for the recovery of prehistoric sites in the nominated area.

A high potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources in the nominated area. Local tradition and certain architectural features of the house support a predominantly late 18<sup>th</sup> century construction date for most of the house with indications of pre-existing First Period or mid-century construction. Original construction may date to the Thomas Stetson period of ownership in ca. 1674. Archaeological features may be present around and under the house related to its different periods of construction and occupation. Construction features can be present related to changes in the layout of the house. Occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) should also be present and in some instances are demonstrated in the area. At least three wells are known in the area around the house. A shallow fieldstone well of unknown construction date is located east of the barn foundation and south of the house. A second well, possibly dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is also present under the 20<sup>th</sup> century addition to the rear ell. A third artesian well was drilled in the property in 1967 when the second well went dry. A fieldstone foundation representing at least one privy is also known a short distance northwest of the house. Other privy sites may also be present. Trash pits are probably present in the area around the house and outbuilding foundations. Trash sites or dump areas are also present in areas beyond the house site as indicated by a known deposit southwest of the barn beyond the stone walls which surround the house site area.. Only one outbuilding, a 1990s chicken coop survives intact on the property, however, several others are known from archaeological remains. Structural remains from a privy structure have been noted above. South of the house, partial foundations from three pre-1860 outbuildings are present beginning with the foundation of a woodhouse or shop immediately south of the house the remains of a corn barn and larger barn foundation south of that location. The remains of additional outbuildings may also be present, possibly dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century period.

(end)

Stetson-Ford House  
Name of Property

Plymouth, Massachusetts  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

#### Period of Significance

ca. 1674-1947

#### Significant Dates

1674

1781

1783-1785

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Thomas Stetson

Michael Ford

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government, Library, Town Hall
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Stetson-Ford House was built and occupied by prominent members of two families, the Stetsons and Fords, who helped shape the economy, culture and development of the community of Norwell and its surroundings over the course of two centuries. The centerpiece of the Stetson's "Hundred Acre Farm," the house, with its immediate surroundings and farmstead remnants, is linked to the long evolution of agriculture along the saltmarshes of the North River, which was continued into the middle of the twentieth century by George Morton and his family. As the residence of shipbuilders Thomas And Ebenezer Stetson, and Michael Ford, his son and grandson, its significance extends beyond local boundaries to the late-seventeenth through mid-nineteenth-century maritime economy of southeastern Massachusetts. The stylishness and lavish transitional Georgian/Federal period woodwork of Michael Ford's 1780s updating of the house also bespeaks the prosperity generated by the regional shipbuilding industry at its height in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The building is an outstanding illustration of high-quality post-Revolutionary craftsmanship (on the part of Michael Ford), superimposed on a pre-1750 structure, part of which, according to tradition, may be the earliest extant house in Norwell, begun by Thomas Stetson ca. 1674. The Stetson-Ford House thus meets Criteria A and C of the National Register at the local level, maintaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Although the first English settlement of Norwell dates to the early years of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, it did not become incorporated as the separate town of South Scituate until 1849; the name was changed to Norwell in 1888. For its first two centuries the little village was an outlying part of Scituate, where fishing and farming were carried on, salt marsh hay was harvested for livestock, and a brisk shipbuilding industry developed along the North River. Norwell's first church, the South Parish Church, was built between 1642 and 1645. Small mills, some of which became support enterprises for the shipyards, were in existence on Norwell's many streams by 1660. The earliest known was a sawmill built in 1656 on the Third Herring Brook by a group of partners which included Norwell and Scituate's most prominent early settler, Robert Stetson. Robert Stetson (1615-1704), progenitor of most of the Stetson family in America, came to South Scituate in 1638. He had received his first large land grant, which included the property known as the "Hundred Acre Farm," in 1634 and was later awarded more land for serving the colony in several important capacities, including Deputy of the Colony Court, County Commissioner, "Cornet" in charge of Scituate horse troops, and member of the Council of War. For his efforts on the part of the Plymouth Colony, especially during King Philip's War of 1675-76, he was given hundreds of acres more, becoming the largest landowner in Scituate. His home, and those of his four sons, remained on the original North River parcel of 1634.

Robert Stetson first deeded away a portion of his original land grant in 1673 to his son Benjamin, who had established a shipyard on it at Bald Hill, southeast of the site of the Stetson-Ford House. The second property he deeded out was to his son Thomas in 1674. This was the portion known as the Hundred Acre Farm, and the one on which Thomas is known to have begun constructing a house shortly thereafter.

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Shipbuilding had begun on the North River in Scituate as early as 1645. The first shipyard within the boundaries of Norwell was established ca. 1670, followed by several more through the 1690s. Considerable settlement in Norwell resulted in the 1680s and 90s, with most families somehow involved in shipbuilding. Thomas Stetson was apparently associated with his brother's Bald Hill yard, and his son Ebenezer is known to have built several large vessels there. Upon Thomas Stetson's death in 1729 at the age of 87, Ebenezer Stetson (1693-1778), the tenth child, inherited Hundred Acre Farm. He and his wife Lydia (Barker) had five children, two of whom followed their father as shipbuilders at Bald Hill.

The owners of the Stetson-Ford House clearly illustrate the fact that carpentry skills of shipbuilders extended to building construction and cabinetry. In 1731 Ebenezer Stetson built the first Episcopal church in Plymouth Colony, St. Andrew's, at the top of Church Hill in South Scituate on part of his own land. In 1754 he also established the Stetson burial ground on the hill behind the church.

Ebenezer Stetson died in 1778 at the age of 85. In 1781 the house and Hundred Acre Farm were bought from his estate by another shipbuilder, Michael Ford, who had come from neighboring Marshfield. Ford married Rhoda Copeland, the daughter of a prominent shipbuilder, and became a partner in his father-in-law's well-know shipyard at Fox Hill, just west of the Stetson's Bald Hill yard. He was a housewright as well as a shipbuilder, and in the period 1783-85 he transformed the Stetson-Ford House to the high-style Georgian/Federal building it appears today.

Until it closed in 1833, three generations of Fords operated what became known as the Copeland-Ford-Pratt Yard at Fox Hill, while owning and occupying the Stetson-Ford House and farming the Hundred Acre Farm. As well as building ships, they also owned shares in North River vessels. In 1876 Michael Ford II was still a wealthy man, the largest noteholder to the town. The last Ford to live in the house, David Barnes Ford, sold the property to George Morton in 1903-04. In addition to running the hundred Acre Farm through the early part of the twentieth century, Morton was a handyman who did plumbing, carpentry and other jobs in the Norwell area. He and his wife raised five children in the Stetson-Ford House, and grew peas, corn, and tomatoes on the farm, and apples in an orchard which ran south to the river. The Mortons sold their produce locally to summer residents; the apples were sold at the Red Cider Mill in Hanover. The farm was also home to a small herd of cows, and several horses. Morton's sons, George and Charles, were carpenters, and used the "woodhouse" in the farmyard for a carpentry shop. They employed their skills to maintain the house, making only a few alterations, including the extension on the northeast ell that enclosed the existing well.

Except for some haying in the late 1960s, after the death of their parents (George Morton died in 1945), daughters Sarah and Helen Morton ceased operating the property as a farm, but continued to maintain the house to the standards of their father and brothers. In 1972 they sold the entire property, which them amounted to over

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144 acres, to the town of Norwell. The community subsequently set aside a small portion of the Hundred Acre Farm for a development of three houses (including one nineteenth century dwelling), and designated most of the rest of the open land for recreation and conservation. In 1984 the house and the three acres around it, which had been proposed for sale by the town, was placed under the custody of the Norwell Historical Commission which now maintains it as an educational property for the public. The preservation of the Stetson-Ford House is the result of a decades-long multi-faceted effort by local citizens. Under the aegis of the Norwell Historical Commission such jobs as painting, window restoration and grounds management have been repeatedly performed by volunteers, many of them affiliated with the Friends of the Stetson-Ford House. The 1989 Town Meeting allocated \$7,500 for the building, and town staff obtained donations from local residents and businesses that enable students from the South Shore Vocational Technical High School in Hanover, MA, to re-side the house and stabilize parts of the structure the following year. The House is now open to the public by appointment, and is leased to a family who maintain the building while operating a small ongoing agricultural program on the premises.

**Archaeological Significance**

Since patterns of prehistoric settlement and subsistence for the town of Norwell are poorly documented, any surviving sites could be significant. Surprisingly few sites have been recorded in the town with most known sites and related interpretative information the result of local collectors from the pre-1940s and later analysis of their collections during the 1980s. These activities and studies have resulted in uneven coverage for the town and limited interpretative information beyond site location, lithic technology and some data relating to culture history and site variability. Systematic study of any prehistoric sites in the Norwell locale can help improve our prehistoric knowledge of the town by enlarging our data base for the town in a geographical sense and by improving our substantive knowledge of sites through detailed intrasite studies. This information can be used to develop a more representative view of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns in Norwell through time and the social, political and economic relationship of this area with Native American settlement loci in more inland areas and on the coast in the Plymouth Bay locale. This information can be used to define the independence or interdependence of Native core areas along the North River and in the Plymouth area.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on the social, cultural and economic patterns that characterized two prominent families who helped shape the economy, culture and development of the community of Norwell, possibly from the 17<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Further documentary research combined with archaeological testing of the area around the existing house can document modifications to the structure and it's initial construction date. This research can be used to verify or refute local tradition and architectural features of some portions of the house which date it's construction to ca. 1674 and the Thomas Stetson period of ownership. First Period houses and their associated farmstead complexes were constructed within well defined regional and temporal patterns which can be

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

**Stetson-Ford House  
Norwell (Plymouth County)  
Massachusetts**

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tested at the Stetson-Ford House site. The presence or absence of these patterns can contribute much needed information relating to the early settlement period of the house for which little concrete data survives. Archaeological survey and testing of the property can also identify the full functional and temporal range of occupational related features and outbuildings on the property and the role they played in the evolution of the farmstead complex during its period of occupation. Detailed analysis of occupational related features (trash pits, midden deposits, privies and wells) can also document the changing social, cultural and economic activities conducted in and around the house and at various locations within the farmstead complex. Any evidence relating to the interrelationship of the agricultural, shipbuilding and trading interests of the owners would be of special value by providing information on these technologies as well as their role in the lives of the individuals or families who pursued them.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Stetson-Ford House  
Norwell (Plymouth County)  
Massachusetts

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Briggs, Lloyd Vernon. History of Shipbuilding on the North River, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. Boston: Coburn Bros., 1889.
- Coons, Quentin L., ed. Historical Homesteads of Norwell. Norwell: Norwell Historical Society, 1973-1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Norwell Village with Stetson Farms and the Tack Factory. Norwell: Norwell Historical Society, 1980.
- Deane, Samuel. History of Scituate, Massachusetts. Boston: James Loring, 1831.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. Survey and Inventory of Historic, Architectural, and Cultural Resources of Norwell. Boston: MHC.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Reconnaissance Survey Report for Norwell". Undated.
- Merritt, Joseph F. Narrative History of South Scituate-Norwell, Massachusetts. Rockland, MA: 1938.
- Richardson, John P. Brief Report to the People of Norwell Regarding the Stetson-Ford North River Shipbuilder's House. Hingham, MA, 1984.
- Stetson, Nelson M. Stetson Kindred of America, Inc.: Booklet #3. Privately printed, 1911.

(end)

Stetson-Ford House  
Name of Property

Plymouth County, MA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres

### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	352460	4664620			
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Norwell Historical Commission, Joseph Carty, Chair, Anne McC. Forbes, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, MHC, National Register Director

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 1998

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

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Norwell

street & number Town Hall, 345 Main Street telephone 781-659-8072

city or town Norwell state MA zip code 02061

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 1Stetson-Ford House  
Norwell (Plymouth County)  
Massachusetts

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****Verbal boundary description**

The boundary, which encompasses approximately three acres of land surrounding the Stetson-Ford farmhouse, begins at the west-northwest corner of the plot at the point where a small brook runs under the dirt roadway (Meadow Farms Way) leading from the Stetson Shrine Lane. The boundary proceeds east along the roadway approximately 90 ft., then turns north along the road and the fieldstone wall of the Stetson-Ford farmstead approximately 125 ft. It then continues east along the roadway approximately 150 ft. The boundary then turns directly south, running for a distance of approximately 350 ft. It then turns west, running approximately 150 ft. to the brook mentioned above, thence following the brook generally northwest for approximately 300 Ft. to the starting point. (See Sketch Map.)

**Boundary justification.**

The boundary encompasses the surviving portion of the Stetson-Ford farmstead. Along with the farmhouse, its three acres include the fieldstone well, and sections of the barn, woodhouse, cornhouse, and privy foundations. Portions of the boundary follow the fieldstone walls that enclosed the farmyard on the west and north. The plot also includes agricultural and domestic features from the early twentieth-century period: remnants of a flower garden and apple orchard, a small goldfish pond, and a large fieldstone fireplace/barbecue.

Although the farmstead is located at the heart of the original "Hundred Acre Farm" of Cornet Robert Stetson, and later Thomas Stetson, (most of which has recently come under the ownership of the town of Norwell), the outer acreage of the farm has diminished in historic integrity by the filling in of open lands with woods, the building of two modern houses farther along Meadow Farms Way, and the construction of state route 3 two hundred yards south of the farmhouse.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number photos Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Stetson-Ford House  
Norwell (Plymouth County)  
Massachusetts**

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**PHOTOGRAPHS (8 x 10")**

--- taken by Cary Wolinsky, May 1995  
--- negatives at Norwell Historical Commission

1. Main facade (south elevation)
2. View looking northeast
3. West side
4. Rear of house (north side), with rear ell
5. East side

**SUPPLEMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS (3 1/2 x 5")**

--- taken by Anne Forbes, 1997  
--- negatives at Massachusetts Historical Commission

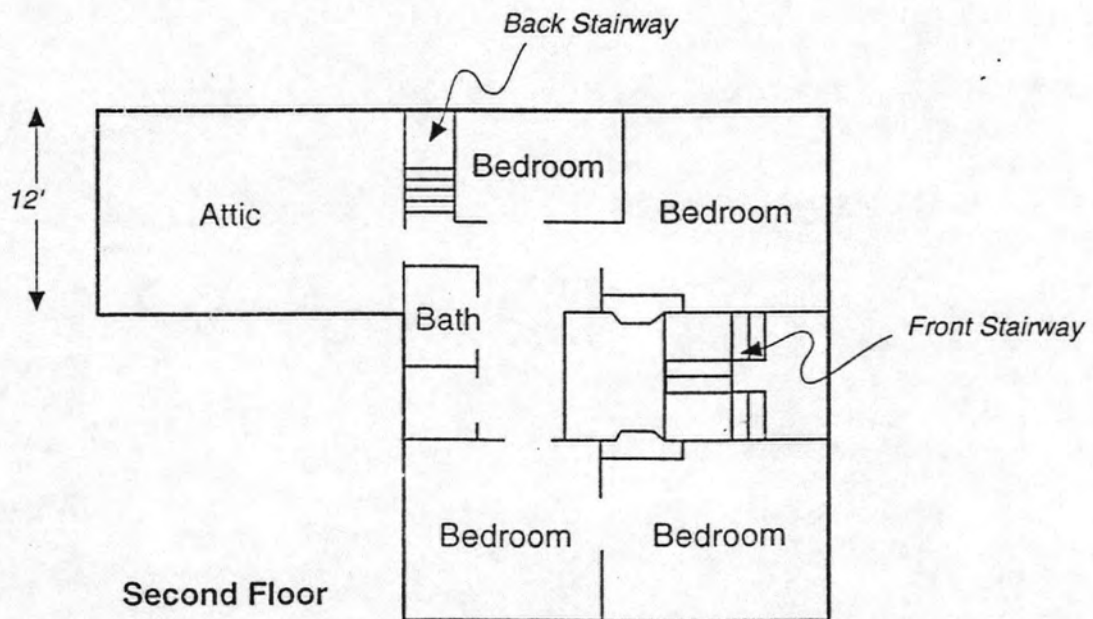
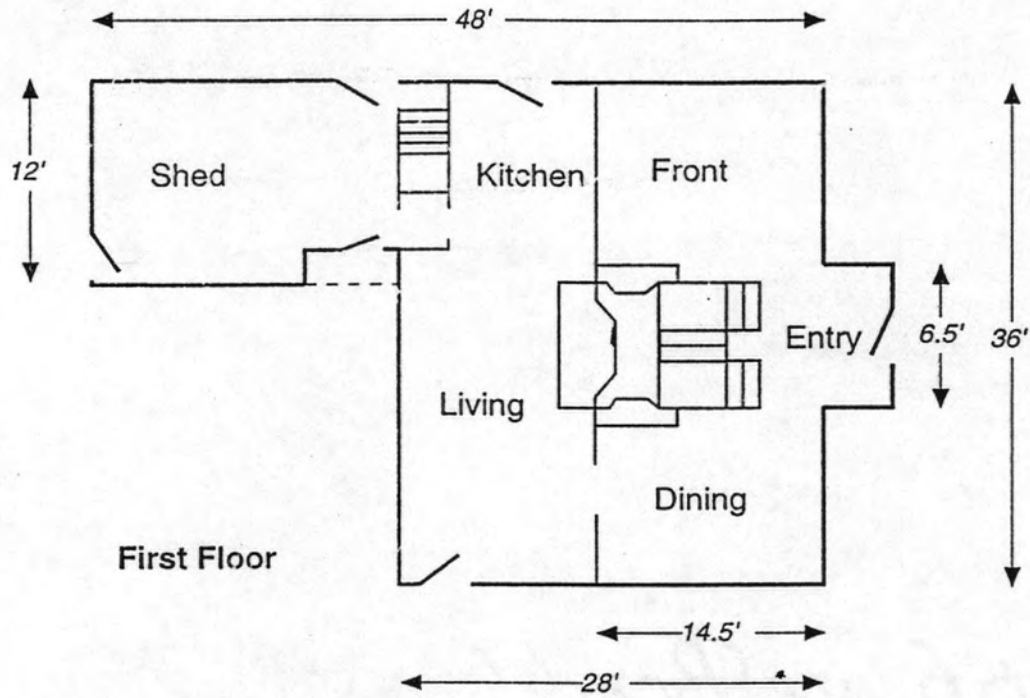
1. Main Entry, looking northwest
2. Goldfish pond
3. Fieldstone outdoor fireplace/barbecue, with portion of fieldstone wall
4. Looking southeast over perennial garden and split-rail fence, with chicken coop, chain-link poultry yard and remnants of apple orchard in background
5. Fireplace detail, rear first story room, with door to bake oven in background
6. Southwest parlor: fireplace wall
7. Southeast parlor: fireplace wall
8. Southwest chamber: fireplace wall
9. Southeast chamber: fireplace wall
10. Lobby entrance: staircase detail
11. Cellar door: strap hinge with leather washers
12. Rear ell: ceiling beams and joists

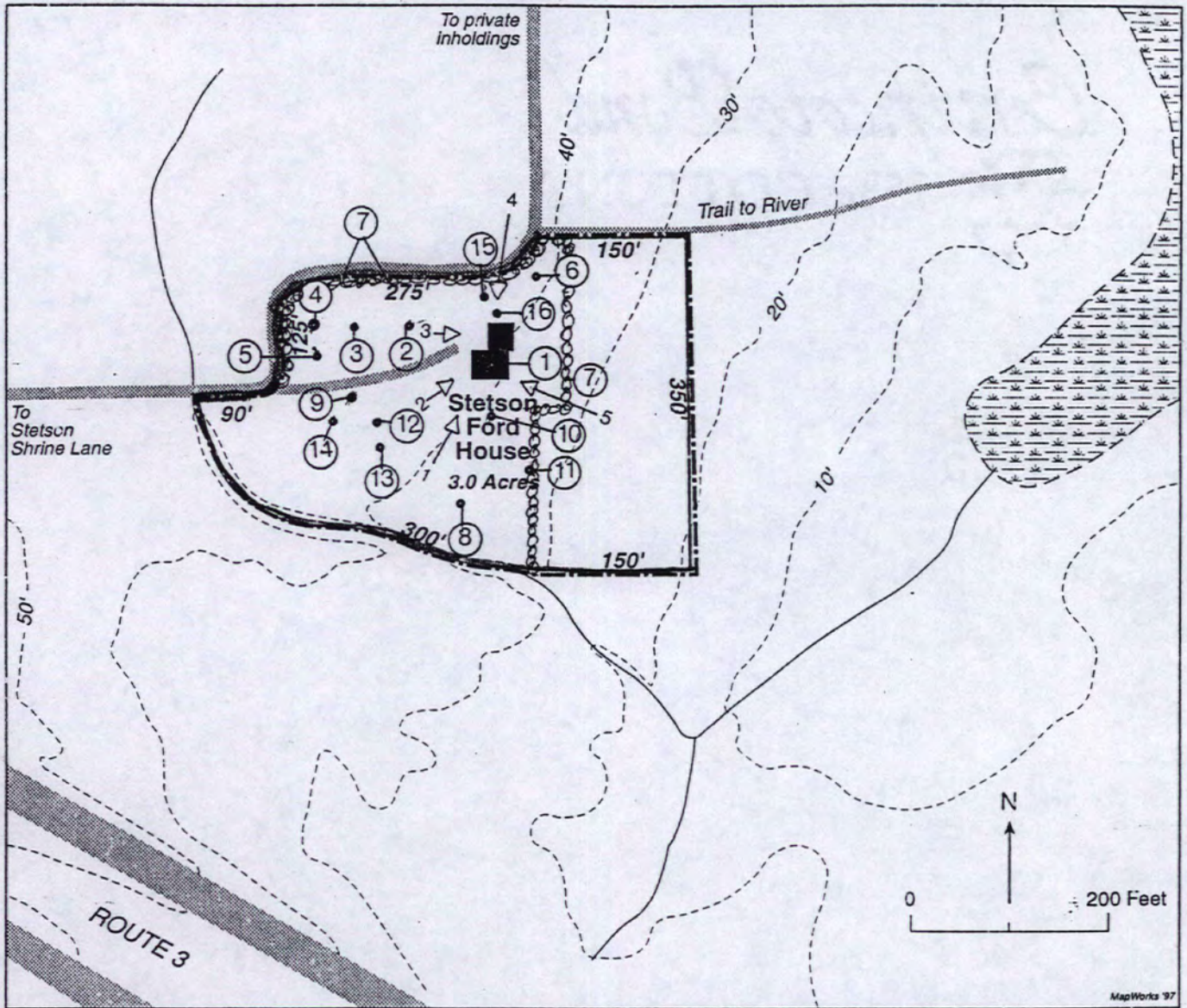
(end)

# STETSON-FORD HOUSE

NORWELL, MA

## FLOOR PLAN





**Stetson Ford House**  
Norwell, Massachusetts

**SKETCH MAP**

Norwell Historical Commission Property Boundaries at Stetson Meadows

- — map numbers
- ← — photo numbers

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number data sheets Page 1  
Stetson-Ford House  
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Massachusetts

RESOURCE COUNT

C = contributing; NC = non-contributing  
B = building; O = object; Si = site;  
St = structure

MAP#	NAME OR DESCRIPTION	DATE	STATUS	TYPE
1	Stetson-Ford House	ca. 1674/1781	C	B
2	partial foundation of woodhouse	pre-1860	C	Si
3	partial foundation of corn barn	pre-1860	C	Si
4	foundation of barn	pre-1860	C	Si
5	fieldstone well	18th/19th century	C	O
6	privy foundation	19th-early 20th	C	Si
7	system of fieldstone walls	18th/19th century	C	St
8	remnants of apple orchard	early 20th century	C	Si
9	remnants of perennial garden	early 20th century	C	Si
10	goldfish pond	ca. 1940	C	St
11	fieldstone barbecue	ca. 1940	C	O
12	chicken coop	1990's	NC	B
13	chain-link fence enclosure	mid-1990's	NC	O
14	split-rail fence	mid-1990's	NC	O
15	flagpole	mid-20th century	NC	O
16	artesian well, with cap	mid-20th century	NC	O

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                          sheet Page   2  

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Massachusetts

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**TOTAL RESOURCE COUNT:**

**Contributing**

**Non-contributing**

BUILDINGS	1	1
STRUCTURES:	2	0
OBJECTS:	2	4
SITES:	6	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>TOTAL: 5</b>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Stetson--Ford House  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Plymouth

DATE RECEIVED: 1/23/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/02/98  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/18/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/09/98  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98000120

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 3/9/98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA accept A&C

REVIEWER Patricia Andrews

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 3/9/98

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



Property Name : Stetson Ford House  
Street Address : 2 Meadow Farm Way  
Community : Norwell, MA 02061

Photographer : Cary Wolinsky  
Date : May 1995

Location of : Norwell Historical Commission  
negative

Photograph 1 of 5

Description of View: Front (south)



Property Name: Stetson Ford House  
Street Address: 2 Meadow Farm Way  
Community: Norwell, MA 02061

Photographer: Cary Wolinsky

Date: May 1995

Location of Negative: Norwell Historical Commission

Photograph 2 of 5

Description of View: Oblique view of south (front)  
and west sides.



Property Name: Stetson Ford House  
street Address: 2 Meadow Farms Way  
Community: Norwell, MA 02061

Photographer: Cary Wolinsky  
Date: May, 1995

Location of  
Negative: Norwell Historical Commission

Photograph 3 of 5

Description of View: West Side



Property Name: Stetson Ford House  
Street Address: 2 Meadow Farms Way  
Community: Norwell, MA 02061

Photographer: Cary Wolinsky

Date: May 1995

Location of  
Negative: Norwell Historical Commission

Photograph: 4 of 5

Description of View: Rear (north)



Property Name: Stetson Ford House  
Street Address: 2 Meadow Farms Way  
Community: Norwell, Ma 02061

Photographer: Cary Wolinsky  
Date: May 1995  
Location of Negative: Norwell Historical Commission

Photograph 5 of 5

Description of View: East Side



STETSON - FORD HOUSE  
NORWELL.

① MAIN ENTRY

Forbes  
II-13A  
1997



STETSON. FORD HOUSE  
NORWELL

② Goldfish Pond

Forbes  
I-12  
1997



STATSON-FORD HOUSE

NORWELL

③ Stone barbecue/fireplace

Fishes  
I-14  
1997



STATSON. FORD HOUSE

NOZUWA

④ Perennial garden fence, Chicken coop, etc.

Fabus  
I. 16  
1997



Stetson - Ford House  
Xonwell

⑤ near fireplace, with bats open

Forbes  
I-17  
1997



STUTSON-FORD HOUSE

NORWELL

⑥ SW parlor: fireplace wall

Forbes  
I-20  
1997



STUTSON-FORD HOUSE  
NORWELL

⑦ see Parlor: Fireplace Wall

Forbes  
F-23  
1997



STETSON - FORD HOUSE  
NORWELL

(8) SW Chamber: Fireplace wall

Folkes  
II-4A  
1997



STEVENS. FORD HOUSE

Nowell

(9) S3 Chamber: Fireplace wall

Ferbes

II-5A

1997



STÅTSON - FORD HUBU  
NORWIL

⑩ LOBBY ENTRANCE:  
Storage detail

Forbes  
II-319  
1997



STATION. FORD HOUSE  
NORWICH

- ① Cellar door, with step hinge  
with leather washers

Fribo  
II - 10A

1997



STETSON-FORD HOUSE  
NORWELL

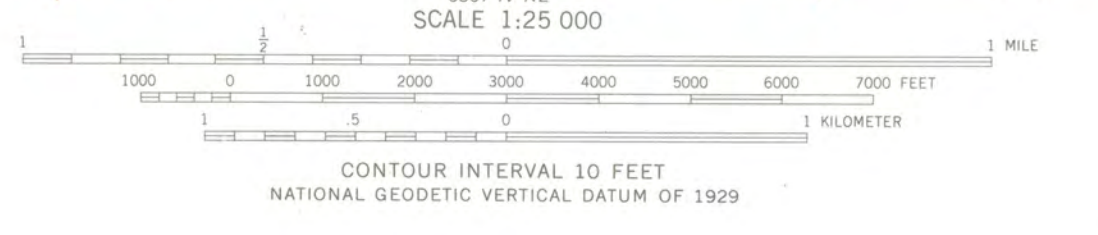
(12) Rear ell: ceiling beams + joists

Forbes  
II-9A  
1997

Station Ford house 2018 19  
NORWELL, MA E: 852460  
N: 4664620



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable survey 1935. Revised from aerial  
photographs taken 1974. Field checked 1975. Map edited 1978  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19



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



HANOVER, MASS.  
N4200—W7045/7.5  
1978  
AMS 6868 III SE—SERIES V814

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



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

21  
January 14, 1998

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Stetson-Ford House, 2 Meadow Farms Way, Norwell (Plymouth Co.), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property within the district were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Joseph R. Carty, Chair, Norwell Historical Commission  
Donald R. LeClair, Jr., Chair, Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Anne McCarthy Forbes, Preservation Consultant