

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0675326

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RECEIVED

APR 12 1979

JUN 15 1979

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Hooper-Lee-Nichols House

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

159 Brattle Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE
025

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE
017**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Cambridge Historical Society ✓

STREET & NUMBER

159 Brattle Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

VICINITY OF

STATE
Massachusetts**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge; Report Four:
Old Cambridge

DATE

1975

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Cambridge Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT
☒GOOD
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED
—RUINS
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED
☒ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ORIGINAL SITE
—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House was constructed in c. 1685 and has undergone major alterations. The seventeenth century character of the house is immediately apparent only in the massive central chimney, a huge construction twelve feet square with six flues protruding above the roof. The house was remodelled in the Georgian style in c. 1745, at which time the roof was raised, the vestibule shutters and quoins added to the exterior, and one wall stuccoed. The pedimented gable of the strongly projecting vestibule is supported by paired pilasters flanking an unusually wide and low single door of nine panels. The window frames project strongly from the facade with heavy cornices and moulded sills; the shutters are in the heavy scale of the eighteenth century and have fixed louvers. Windows are eight over twelve in the first two stories, and eight over eight in the main house, which is covered in roughcast scored to resemble ashlar masonry. The low pitched roof is screened by a wooden parapet added in 1860. The solid panels of the parapet alternate with balusters to emphasize the spacing of the bays.

The interior of the house reflects the extensive remodellings that were carried out in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Both the east and west first floor rooms have panelling, mantels, and window seats added between 1745 and 1760. The boxed summer beams run longitudinally in the east room and transversely in the west room. The paper in the west first floor front room shows views of the Bosphorus and perhaps Istanbul, and may have been the work of Dufour of Paris. The "Bay of Naples" paper in the west front room on the second floor is better known, and is definitely a Dufour creation, printed in France c. 1820. The former kitchen was converted to a library in 1916, and the earlier fireplaces removed.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☒ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☒ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1680, c. 1745 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Various

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House is the oldest of seven mansions on Brattle Street in Cambridge associated with Tory figures of the pre-Revolutionary period. It is one of three houses originally constructed in the seventeenth century remaining in Cambridge and, although altered numerous times in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it retains its importance as a largely eighteenth century mansion. The property is currently operated as an historic house museum by the Cambridge Historical Society.

The house was constructed c. 1685 on a farm in what was then Watertown by Dr. Richard Hooper. Dr. Hooper died in 1691, and by this time the house had already been seriously damaged by fire and "wormes." The earliest existing element of the house, its great central chimney stack twelve feet square built of granite and brick, dates from this period. Dr. Hooper's widow, who had a license to operate an inn, thoroughly repaired and altered the house in 1716-1717 before passing it to her son, Dr. Henry Hooper; the present stairs and a fragment of panelling under the present fireplace wall in the left chamber date from this remodelling.

In 1733, a Boston merchant, Cornelius Waldo, became owner of the house and after unsuccessfully advertising it for rent "to a Gentleman for a Country Seat", apparently occupied it himself. The present third story and much of the present panelling and interior trim were added about 1745.

In 1748, the house was purchased by Joseph Lee, a Judge in the Court of Common Pleas of Middlesex County, a founder of Christ Church, Cambridge, in 1759, and a Mandamus Councillor in 1774. Lee's wife was a daughter of Spencer Phips, colonial Governor of Massachusetts in 1749 and 1756, and during the Lee family years the house was one of six pre-1776 homes along the road to Watertown occupied by one large family group. A sister of Mrs. Lee married Richard Lechmere, who built in 1767 at the site now numbered 145 Brattle Street. Another sister married a relation of

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cambridge Historical Commission,
Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Four:
Old Cambridge.
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.41

QUADRANGLE NAME Lexington, MA

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 324110 4693640

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

see attached assessor's map, with the property boundary marked in black

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Cambridge Historical Commission

DATE

March 11, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

57 Inman Street

TELEPHONE

617-98-9040

CITY OR TOWN

Cambridge, Mass. 02139

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL ✓

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Patricia R. Weseloh

4/6/79

TITLE Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE April 6, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 6.15.79

DATE 6/15/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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JUN 15 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET One

ITEM NUMBER Eight PAGE Three

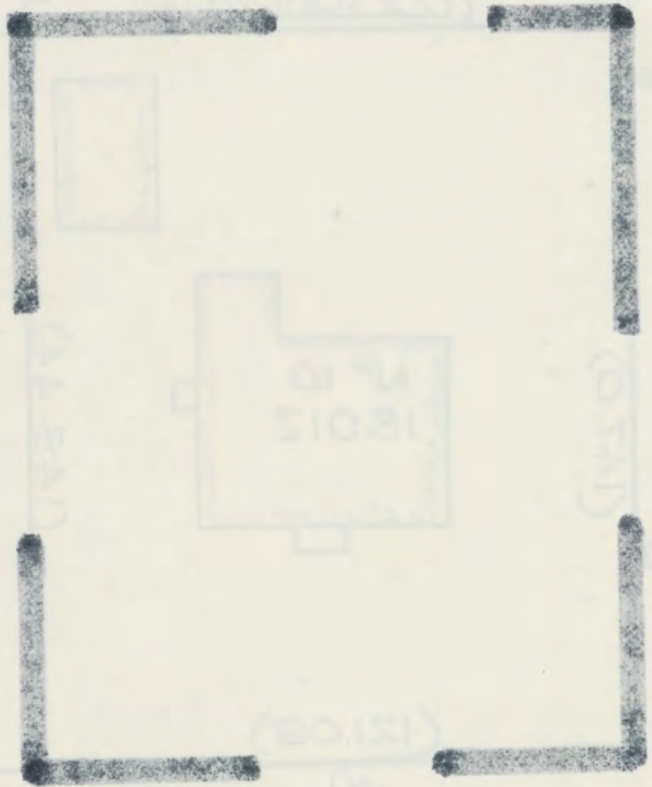
Col. Henry Vassall (#94 Brattle, built 1746) and of George Ruggles (#175 Brattle, built 1760). Two nephews of Judge Lee settled close by: John Vassall, Jr., who built at 105 Brattle in 1759 (known today as Longfellow House), and Thomas Oliver, Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, who built at 33 Elmwood Avenue in 1767 (known today as the former James Russell Lowell House).

Judge Lee considerably altered and enlarged the house c. 1748-60, adding hearths and mantels in the openings of the fireplaces of the two front rooms of the first floor and installing window seats and panelling. Judge Lee, although only mildly Tory, was forced by public pressure to resign as a Mandamus Councillor on September 2, 1774. Although he subsequently took refuge with Tory friends in Boston, his Cambridge house was not confiscated. By 1777 he had returned to it and lived there until his death on December 5, 1802. Descendants of Judge Lee lived in the house until 1850, when the house and remaining land was rented to George Nichols, who dug a cellar, provided a furnace, and strengthened the house. Because the house looked low for its breadth, Nichols purchased a discarded mahogany railing from the chancel of St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Tremont Street, Boston, and used the balusters to make the existing decorative parapet along the front edge of the roof. Nichols bought the house in 1860. Early in the twentieth century, Nichols' grandson, Austin T. White, became the owner, and made further changes under the direction of the Boston architect Joseph E. Chandler. White added the present library and its fireplace, and remodelled and enlarged the ell.

JUN 15 1979



NOTATION



ST. BRATTLE

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

SCALE 1" = 40' - SEPTEMBER 1975

Property Hooper - Lee - Nichols House
State Mass (Middlesex) Working Number 4.12.79.821

TECHNICAL

Photos 1
Maps 1

CONTROL

pl
OK 4.12.79
HISTORIAN

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

ONE OF THE EARLIEST HOUSES IN CAMBRIDGE THOUGH LARGELY TODAY
REFLECTING ITS MID 18TH CENTURY APPEARANCE. THE HOUSE CONTAINS
ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES INSTALLED AT VARIOUS TIMES BY ITS EARLIER
OCCUPANTS

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

ACCEPT
Max Doughty
6/15/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up
Federal Register Entry

7-3-79

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered JUN 15 1979



Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
Middlesex County
1 of 1

JUN 15 1979

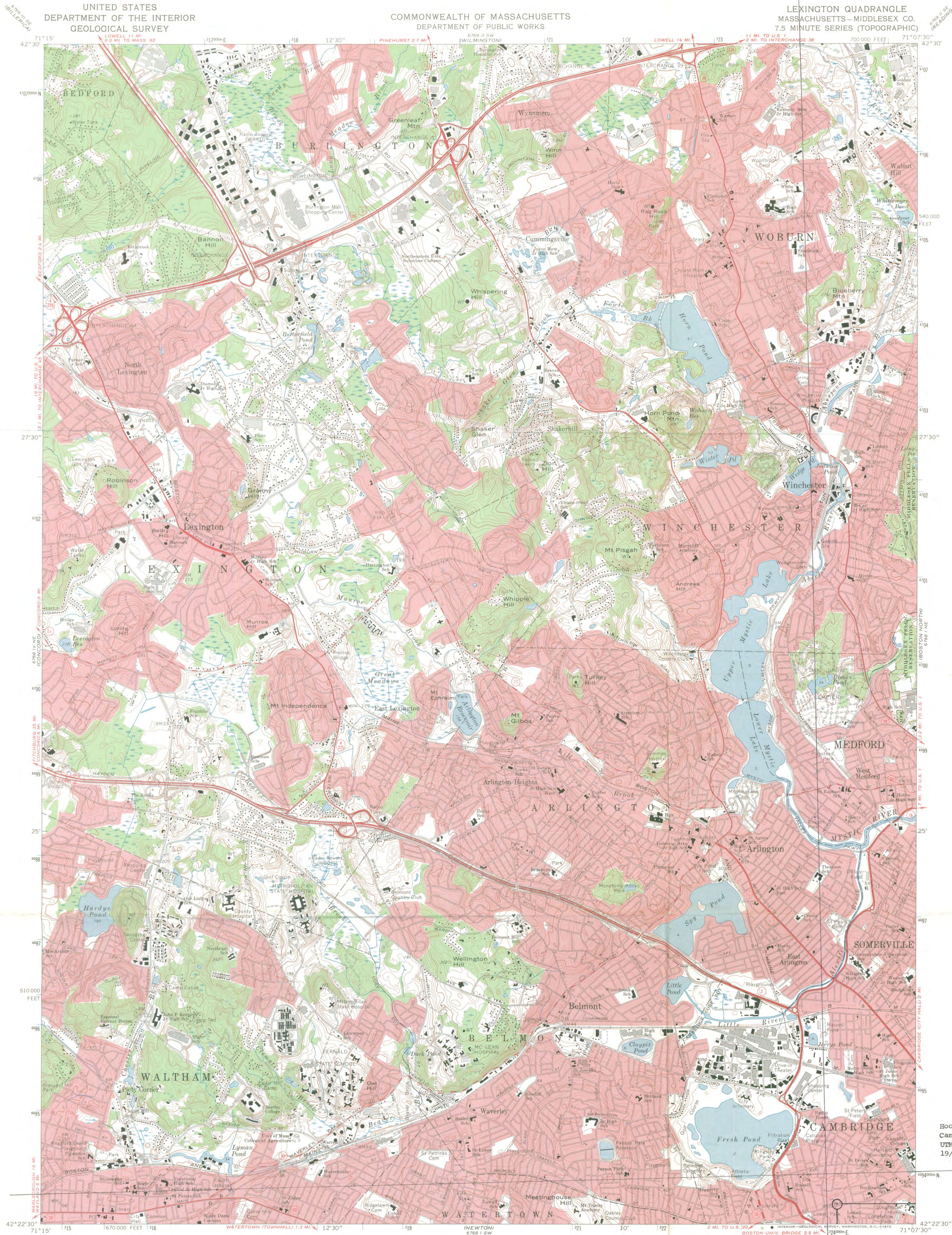
APR 12 1979

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION COPY PHOTOGRAPH

No. #1058/9

Date Copied JUN 15 1979 March 12, 1979

Source Lee-Nichols House, 159 Brattle St.



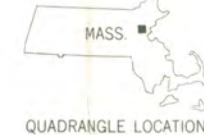
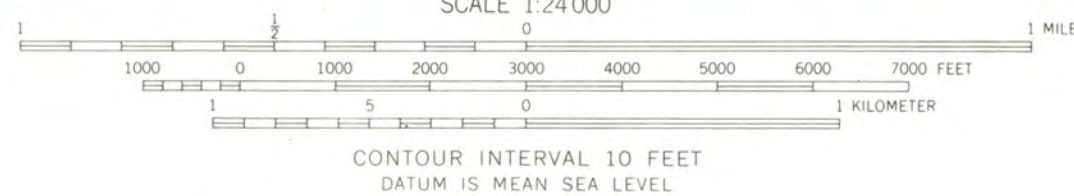
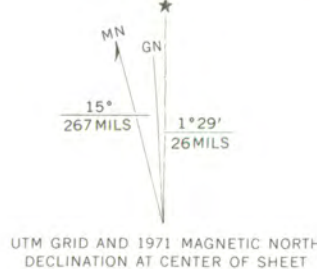
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts

Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1939. Topography by planetable surveys 1943
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark
buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

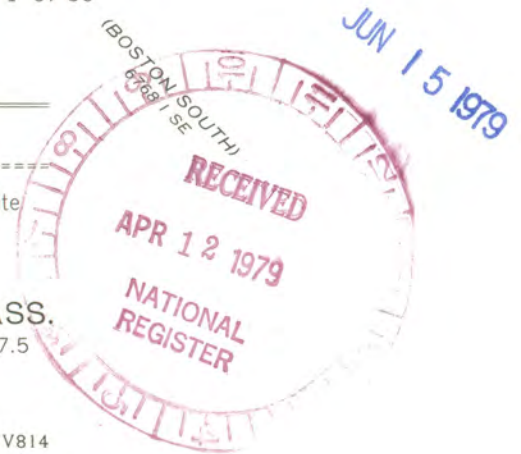
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Interstate Route
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
U. S. Route
State Route

LEXINGTON, MASS.
N4222.5-W7107.5/7.5

1971

AMS 6768 1 NW—SERIES V814

Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
Cambridge, MA
UTM reference
19/324110/4693640



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered JUN 15 1979

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Hooper-Lee-Nichols House	Cambridge Middlesex County
Calvanistic Congregational Church	Fitchburg Worcester County
Sawin, Ezekiel, House	Fairhaven Bristol County

Also Notified

Honorable Paul G. Tsongas

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Honorable Robert F. Drinan
Honorable Gerry E. Studds

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR Byers/bjr 6/19/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.