

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 25 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic William Nichols House
and or common Nichols-Sterner House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Swamp Road/Pittsfield Road N/A not for publication
city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of
state Massachusetts code 025 county Berkshire code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sangiolo
street & number 179 Newton Street
city, town Weston N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds
street & number Park Square
city, town Pittsfield state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1969 Inv. # 3 federal state county local
depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street
city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description Nichols-Sterner House, Richmond, Massachusetts

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 Nichols-Sterner House is located on Pittsfield Road (also known as Swamp Road and Barker Road) in Richmond, a rural hill town on the New York/Massachusetts border in the Berkshire Mountains. Built ca. 1820, the brick house is set on a lot of 2.2 acres on a low rise, enclosed on the south and west by a stone retaining wall, and thickly wooded with deciduous trees and lilac bushes. The house faces south and is approached via a short driveway. It is located in a rural setting. Richmond Pond, a 210-acre body of water beyond which rise the Taconic Mountains, is located 1/2 mile to the north; Stevens Corner, a junction at which are located the remains of an early village center (including several early 19th century residences and a former general store), is 3/4 mile to the southwest; the Lenox Mountains (2,124 feet at their highest point) are 3/4 mile to the southeast. A short distance to the east of the Nichols-Sterner House stands the ca. 1830-1858 Kimball House, a Greek Revival-style wood-frame dwelling that once was owned by members of the Nichols family but that has undergone alterations.

The house, a late Federal-style residence with Greek Revival features, is 2 1/2 stories in height with a gabled front. It is constructed of common-laid brick, with a 1 1/2-story brick ell, also gable roofed, set at the building's northeast side and a single-story greenhouse ell extending from the rear, northern facade. The brick ell is contemporary with the main block, while the greenhouse addition at the rear of the building was added in 1985. The house rests on a dry-laid granite foundation faced with a dressed marble watercourse. The main block contains two chimneys inside the western wall; an additional chimney pierces the brick ell's gable end at the ridge. The windows (6/6) and doors on both the main block and brick ell have marble lintels and sills.

The main (southern) facade, three bays wide, is dominated by a fine Federal entry surround. Incised pilasters with capitals support a marble arch with beaded key; within the arch is a recessed fan light. The entry is approached by two half-round brick stairs. The gable is enclosed, with shallow returns resting on the enclosed pediment. Within the gable is a marble-enframed fan window, again ornamented with a beaded keystone.

On its western elevation, the main block is two widely spaced bays deep, with 6/6 sash. Two tall brick interior chimneys project from the edge of the gable roof, one to the south of each of the windows.

The main block's eastern facade also contains two banks of 6/6 sash, as well as a door, asymmetrically placed. The building's eastern side is dominated by the 1 1/2-story gable-roofed ell, three bays deep and resting on a foundation of granite block, which extends from the structure's northeastern corner. This ell is three close-set bays wide on the east side (two 6/6 sash flanking

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Continuation sheet

Nichols-Sterner House, Richmond, MA

Item number

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a door on the ground floor, 8/4 sash set flush with the box cornice above); the northern gable end is blank save for the interior brick chimney piercing the gable peak.

On the main block, the northern, rear facade of the building is covered on the first story with a recent single-story greenhouse addition, which stands on the site of an early 20th century clapboard ell. Located on the second story are two 6/6 sash with marble lintels and sills, again asymmetrically placed, and, just to the west of the chimney in the gable peak, an 8/4 sash window set beneath a splayed brick lintel. A narrow chimney of cinderblock, added in the 20th century, was removed during the 1985 renovation. Also projecting from the rear facade is the brick ell's northern facade, two bays deep with a cellar bulkhead.

The building's interior retains a number of original features. The main block's side-hall plan, with front and rear parlors of roughly equal size, survives intact. Original woodwork, doors, casing, and mantels remain. An entry on the eastern side, behind the stairs, provides access to both the main house and the brick kitchen ell. The kitchen retains its original fireplace, bake oven, and ash pit along with its mantel and cupboards. The front hall's woodwork has been marbleized; on the wall is a mural depicting several views of the Erie Canal. Both are the work of Albert Sterner, the building's occupant from 1925-1946. On the second floor at the head of the stairs is a mural of a flower-filled urn, painted in a primitive style; it, too, was done by Sterner.

Archaeology

While no prehistoric sites are recorded on the property, sites have been reported around nearby Richmond Pond. Given the property's location on well-drained land overlooking wetlands adjacent to the pond, there is a potential for sites being present. Since very few sites have been recorded in Richmond, any survivals would be significant.

There is also a potential for significant historical archaeological sites, particularly occupation-related features (pits, privies, and wells) as well as the foundations of buildings and structures no longer extant. Analysis of these features would help to document the social, cultural, and economic patterns that characterized rural life in Berkshire County during the 19th century.

8. Significance

Nichols-Sterner House, Richmond, Massachusetts

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1820-1946 **Builder/Architect** William Nichols

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Nichols-Sterner House, in Richmond, Massachusetts, retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Built ca. 1820, the house is a well-preserved and stylish example of the transition from the Federal to Greek Revival style, and is one of only two brick houses of the period in Richmond. The house holds associations with the Nichols family, who occupied the property year-round from ca. 1820 to 1925, and with New York artist Albert Sterner, who used the house as a summer residence from 1925 until his death in 1946. Examples of Sterner's wall paintings and faux detailing remain in the house. The Nichols-Sterner House thus fulfills Criteria B and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Richmond was first settled in 1760, and incorporated in 1765. Because of its rugged and isolated location in the Berkshire hills, the town has been sparsely populated for much of its history. In 1775, the population stood at 921, a figure that would fluctuate little over the next two centuries (1840: 1,152; 1980: 1,659). Until the late 1820s, Richmond was wholly an agricultural community whose land supported some grazing animals, primarily sheep. One woolen mill was in operation by 1830; it was located east of Stevens Corner, the town's early 19th century node of settlement.

Stevens Corner grew along a valley at the northeastern corner of Richmond, at the junction of several early roads. One was Pittsfield Road, also known as Swamp Road and, by 1800, the 10th Massachusetts Turnpike. This was the major north/south route over Osceola Mountain (elevation: 1,460 feet), linking Pittsfield to the north and West Stockbridge to the south. The other roadway, Summit Road, led west to neighboring New York State. The nominated property, the remnant of a 19th century farm, was built about 3/4 mile northeast of Stevens Corner on Pittsfield Road.

William Nichols, a farmer, built the nominated property ca. 1820 on 103 acres of land purchased from Levi Beebe four years earlier. (The 2.2 acres that are part of the nomination are all that now remain with the property.) The house and land descended in the Nichols family until 1925, when it was sold to Flora Lash Sterner. Its specific agricultural use is unknown.

In the 1820s, Richmond's character was altered as industrialization came to the community: iron ore was discovered just north of the West Stockbridge line. In 1829, the Richmond Iron Works were organized. The furnace, the remains of which survive in southwest Richmond, went into operation in 1831. The iron industry brought with it an influx of ironworkers that swelled the population to a peak of 1,152 in 1840 and brought a period of relative prosperity to Richmond. A Federal/Greek Revival-style house on Furnace Road

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National Park Service**

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near the ironworks, built ca. 1830, is believed to have housed the ironworks manager; it is the only other period brick residence in Richmond.

In 1838-1841, the Western Railroad, joining the Boston/Worcester line with Pittsfield, New York State, and points west, was constructed through the valley. Its presence spurred the growth of Richmond's ironworks, which continued to develop through the Civil War. Among the customers for Richmond ore were a number of rail companies, who purchased the iron for use in manufacturing railcar wheels. The railroad was built west of Stevens Corner; over time, its presence reduced traffic along the 10th Massachusetts Turnpike (Pittsfield Road) that passed through Stevens Corner. The latter never became a clearly defined village center, but remained a rural agricultural settlement even as industrialization came to other parts of Richmond.

By the 1880s, Richmond's ironworks had entered into decline. Western competition, particularly from Minnesota mines, and the invention of the cheaper Bessemer process made Berkshire County iron too expensive. By ca. 1920, the Richmond mine had closed; the railroad station was demolished shortly thereafter, workers moved away, and all of Richmond became once again a sparsely populated, essentially rural community.

At the same time, however, city residents from Boston, New York City, and elsewhere were discovering the summer pleasures of the Berkshire Mountains. The Berkshire Symphonic Festival (later Tanglewood) in nearby Stockbridge began in 1936, bringing many visitors and part-time residents to the area. Today, many Richmond residents are seasonal, using the village as a summer community. Others work in nearby Pittsfield.

Mrs. Sterner and her husband, portrait painter and illustrator Albert Sterner, moved to Richmond in the late 1920s and used the house for many years as a summer residence. Their year-round home was in New York City, where Mr. Sterner was well known for his portraiture and illustrations for such magazines as Colliers, Life, and Harpers. Among the prizes that he received during his long career (he was born in 1863) were the National Academician bronze medal, Munich (1905), National Academy of Design Clara Obbrig prize (1935), and the Carnegie Prize (1941). Shortly after his death in 1946, at the age of 83, the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield sponsored a retrospective of his works. The nominated property contains several murals and faux work done by Mr. Sterner.

Mrs. Sterner owned the property until 1981, but did not use it after her husband's death. Instead, the house sat empty, suffering significantly from neglect. The present owners have restored the property and continue to use it as a vacation home.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.2 acres

Quadrangle name Pittsfield West

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A 18 638250 4615940
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached deed and sketch map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission, with James Parrish, former Preservation Planner, Berkshire County Regional Planning

organization Commission, and Mark Sangiolo date April 1986
Massachusetts Historical Commission

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

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 Valerie A. Talmage

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/12/86
Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Nichols-Sterner House, Richmond, Massachusetts

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Continuation sheet

Item number

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Berkshire Eagle, "Albert Sterner, Noted Artist, Dead at 83." December 17, 1946.

_____, "Sterner Retrospective Show Biggest Ever of His Works." June 9, 1956.

_____, "Flora T. L. Sterner." Obituary, May 5, 1982.

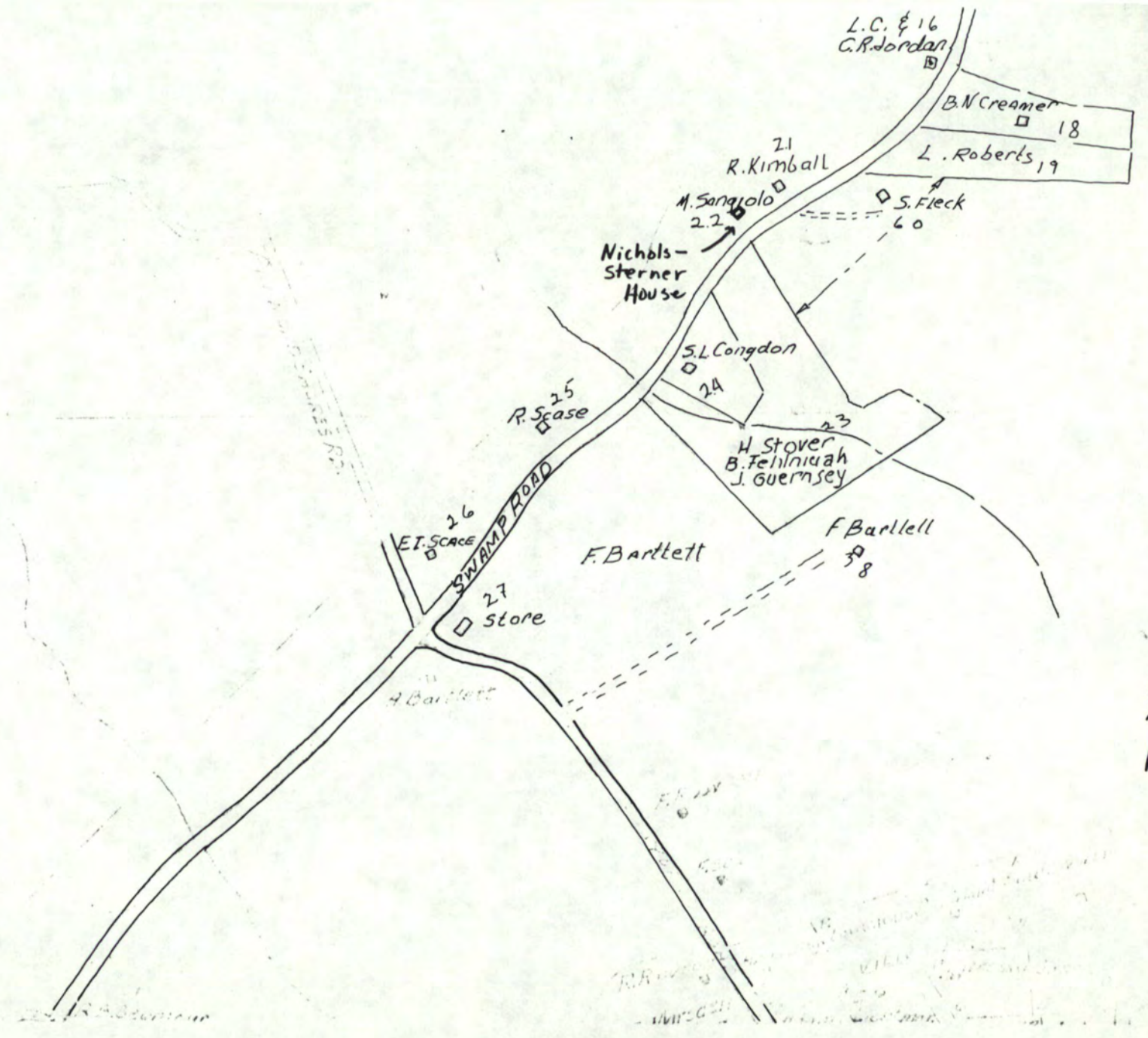
Child, Hamilton, Child Gazetteer of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. 1885.

Gibbs, Rebecca Whitehead, Richmond Looks Back. 1936.

The Berkshire Hills. American Guide Series, Federal Writers Project, Works Progress Administration, 1939.

Richmond Vital Records to the Year 1850.

Richmond Town Reports, 1869, 1877, 1885, 1886, and 1887.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

Nichols-Sterner House
Berkshire County
MASSACHUSETTS

JUN 25 1986

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: _____

Date Due: 7/24/86 - 8/9/86

Action: ACCEPT

RETURN 8-5-86

REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

see following comments.

Recom./Criteria: Return

Reviewer: Savage

Discipline: Architectural History

Date: 8/7/86

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

Criteria
C

Although the property appears eligible for architectural significance as a well-preserved example of c.1820 brick residence executed in transitional Federal/Greek Revival Style in Richmond, the

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

Builder/Architect

Period of significance, 1820-1946, is not justified. If property considered eligible for artwork as work of a master, please provide context for evaluation of these murals in regard to Sterner's body of work.

Art as an area of significance for associations w/ Sterner has not been sufficiently justified, criteria g. has not been addressed for property's exception with a period of significance of less than 50 years of age. More context is necessary to establish exceptional importance of property.

Importance of William Nichols within context of local history has not been established. Association w/ Nichols family is not justification for eligibility under criteria B, must be association w/ significant individual(s).

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property _____
 Quadrangle name _____
 UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

If the case is made (or intended) for eligibility of the property under Criteria C for artwork as work of a master, please provide photos of murals & faux work executed by Sterner.

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Pat Savage (202) 343-9550

Signed Patrick Andrews

Date 8/5/86

Phone: _____

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National Park Service

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date entered SEP 17 1987

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1. Name

historic William Nichol House

and or common Nichols-Sterner House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Swamp Road/Pittsfield Road N/A not for publication

city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Berkshire code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
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<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sangiolo
179 Newton Street

street & number

city, town Weston N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds

street & number Park Square

city, town Pittsfield state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of
title the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1969 Inv. # 3 federal state county local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston 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 Nichols-Sterner House is located on Pittsfield Road (also known as Swamp Road and Barker Road) in Richmond, a rural hill town on the New York/Massachusetts border in the Berkshire Mountains. Built ca. 1820, the brick house is set on a lot of 2.2 acres on a low rise, enclosed on the south and west by a stone retaining wall, and thickly wooded with deciduous trees and lilac bushes. The house faces south and is approached via a short driveway. It is located in a rural setting. Richmond Pond, a 210-acre body of water beyond which rise the Taconic Mountains, is located 1/2 mile to the north; Stevens Corner, a junction at which are located the remains of an early village center (including several early 19th century residences and a former general store), is 3/4 mile to the southwest; the Lenox Mountains (2,124 feet at their highest point) are 3/4 mile to the southeast. A short distance to the east of the Nichols-Sterner House stands the ca. 1830-1858 Kimball House, a Greek Revival-style wood-frame dwelling that once was owned by members of the Nichols family but that has undergone alterations.

The house, a late Federal-style residence with Greek Revival features, is 2 1/2 stories in height with a gabled front. It is constructed of common-laid brick, with a 1 1/2-story brick ell, also gable roofed, set at the building's northeast side and a single-story greenhouse ell extending from the rear, northern facade. The brick ell is contemporary with the main block, while the greenhouse addition at the rear of the building was added in 1985. The house rests on a dry-laid granite foundation faced with a dressed marble watercourse. The main block contains two chimneys inside the western wall; an additional chimney pierces the brick ell's gable end at the ridge. The windows (6/6) and doors on both the main block and brick ell have marble lintels and sills.

The main (southern) facade, three bays wide, is dominated by a fine Federal entry surround. Incised pilasters with capitals support a marble arch with beaded key; within the arch is a recessed fan light. The entry is approached by two half-round brick stairs. The gable is enclosed, with shallow returns resting on the enclosed pediment. Within the gable is a marble-enframed fan window, again ornamented with a beaded keystone.

On its western elevation, the main block is two widely spaced bays deep, with 6/6 sash. Two tall brick interior chimneys project from the edge of the gable roof, one to the south of each of the windows.

The main block's eastern facade also contains two banks of 6/6 sash, as well as a door, asymmetrically placed. The building's eastern side is dominated by the 1 1/2-story gable-roofed ell, three bays deep and resting on a foundation of granite block, which extends from the structure's northeastern corner. This ell is three close-set bays wide on the east side (two 6/6 sash flanking

continued

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National Park Service

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William Nichol House
Continuation sheet Richmond, Massachusetts Item number 7 Page 1

a door on the ground floor, 8/4 sash set flush with the box cornice above); the northern gable end is blank save for the interior brick chimney piercing the gable peak.

On the main block, the northern, rear facade of the building is covered on the first story with a recent single-story greenhouse addition, which stands on the site of an early 20th century clapboard ell. Located on the second story are two 6/6 sash with marble lintels and sills, again asymmetrically placed, and, just to the west of the chimney in the gable peak, an 8/4 sash window set beneath a splayed brick lintel. A narrow chimney of cinderblock, added in the 20th century, was removed during the 1985 renovation. Also projecting from the rear facade is the brick ell's northern facade, two bays deep with a cellar bulkhead.

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Archaeology

While no prehistoric sites are recorded on the property, sites have been reported around nearby Richmond Pond. Given the property's location on well-drained land overlooking wetlands adjacent to the pond, there is a potential for sites being present. Since very few sites have been recorded in Richmond, any survivals would be significant.

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8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1820

Builder/Architect William Nichols

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Nichols-Sterner House, in Richmond, Massachusetts, retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Built ca. 1820, the house is a well-preserved and stylish example of the transition from the Federal to Greek Revival style, and is one of only two brick houses of the period in Richmond. The house holds associations with the Nichols family, who occupied the property year-round from ca. 1820 to 1925. The Nichols-Sterner House thus fulfils Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Richmond was first settled in 1760, and incorporated in 1765. Because of its rugged and isolated location in the Berkshire hills, the town has been sparsely populated for much of its history. In 1775, the population stood at 921, a figure that would fluctuate little over the next two centuries (1840: 1,152; 1980: 1,659). Until the late 1820s, Richmond was wholly an agricultural community whose land supported some grazing animals, primarily sheep. One woolen mill was in operation by 1830; it was located east of Stevens Corner, the town's early 19th century node of settlement.

Stevens Corner grew along a valley at the northeastern corner of Richmond, at the junction of several early roads. One was Pittsfield Road, also known as Swamp Road and, by 1800, the 10th Massachusetts Turnpike. This was the major north/south route over Osceola Mountain (elevation: 1,460 feet), linking Pittsfield to the north and West Stockbridge to the south. The other roadway, Summit Road, led west to neighboring New York State. The nominated property, the remnant of a 19th century farm, was built about 3/4 mile northeast of Stevens Corner on Pittsfield Road.

William Nichols, a farmer, built the nominated property ca. 1820 on 103 acres of land purchased from Levi Beebe four years earlier. (The 2.2 acres that are part of the nomination are all that now remain with the property.) The house and land descended in the Nichols family until 1925, when it was sold to Flora Lash Sterner. Its specific agricultural use is unknown.

In the 1820s, Richmond's character was altered as industrialization came to the community: iron ore was discovered just north of the West Stockbridge line. In 1829, the Richmond Iron Works were organized. The furnace, the remains of which survive in southwest Richmond, went into operation in 1831. The iron industry brought with it an influx of ironworkers that swelled the population to a peak of 1,152 in 1840 and brought a period of relative prosperity to Richmond. A Federal/Greek Revival-style house on Furnace Road

continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.2 acres

Quadrangle name Pittsfield West

Quadrangle scale 1:25000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	3	8	2	5	0	4	6	1	5	9	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

see attached deed and sketch map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission, with James Parrish, former Preservation Planner, Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission, and Mark Sangiolo

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 1986

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (517) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

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 Valerie A. Taenage

title Executive Director, Historical Commission date July 30, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patricia Andrews date 9/17/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Beth A. Savage date 9/17/87

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

William Nichols House
Richmond, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

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received

date entered

near the ironworks, built ca. 1830, is believed to have housed the ironworks manager; it is the only other period brick residence in Richmond.

In 1838-1841, the Western Railroad, joining the Boston/Worcester line with Pittsfield, New York State, and points west, was constructed through the valley. Its presence spurred the growth of Richmond's ironworks, which continued to develop through the Civil War. Among the customers for Richmond ore were a number of rail companies, who purchased the iron for use in manufacturing railcar wheels. The railroad was built west of Stevens Corner; over time, its presence reduced traffic along the 10th Massachusetts Turnpike (Pittsfield Road) that passed through Stevens Corner. The latter never became a clearly defined village center, but remained a rural agricultural settlement even as industrialization came to other parts of Richmond.

By the 1880s, Richmond's ironworks had entered into decline. Western competition, particularly from Minnesota mines, and the invention of the cheaper Bessemer process made Berkshire County iron too expensive. By ca. 1920, the Richmond mine had closed; the railroad station was demolished shortly thereafter, workers moved away, and all of Richmond became once again a sparsely populated, essentially rural community.

At the same time, however, city residents from Boston, New York City, and elsewhere were discovering the summer pleasures of the Berkshire Mountains. The Berkshire Symphonic Festival (later Tanglewood) in nearby Stockbridge began in 1936, bringing many visitors and part-time residents to the area. Today, many Richmond residents are seasonal, using the village as a summer community. Others work in nearby Pittsfield.

Mrs. Sterner and her husband, portrait painter and illustrator Albert Sterner, moved to Richmond in the late 1920s and used the house for many years as a summer residence. Their year-round home was in New York City, where Mr. Sterner was well known for his portraiture and illustrations for such magazines as Colliers, Life, and Harpers. Among the prizes that he received during his long career (he was born in 1863) were the National Academician bronze medal, Munich (1905), National Academy of Design Clara Obrig prize (1935), and the Carnegie Prize (1941). Shortly after his death in 1946, at the age of 83, the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield sponsored a retrospective of his works. The nominated property contains several murals and faux work done by Mr. Sterner. Sterner's occupancy and career, while important to the world of art, particularly illustration, are not of extraordinary significance when judged in light of the National Register criteria's Exception G. In future, when sufficient distance from the present is achieved, Sterner's work could be evaluated and documented more closely and could then be considered contributing to the property's significance.

continued

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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William Nichols House
Continuation sheet Richmond, Massachusetts Item number 8 Page 2

Mrs. Sterner owned the property until 1981, but did not use it after her husband's death. Instead, the house sat empty, suffering significantly from neglect. The present owners have restored the property and continue to use it as a vacation home.

While its brick construction therefore makes the nominated property almost unique in Richmond, the Nichols-Sterner House is also significant architecturally for its stylish design and detailing, unusual in this rather isolated section of Berkshire County. While its details--particularly the fine fan-lit entryway--reflect the influence of the Federal style, the building's plan, orientation, and pedimented gable suggest the growing interest in the Greek Revival. The Nichols-Sterner House is also distinguished for its exceptional state of preservation.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Nichols-Sterner House, Richmond, Massachusetts

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

1

9. Major Bibliographic References

Berkshire Eagle, "Albert Sterner, Noted Artist, Dead at 83." December 17, 1946.

_____, "Sterner Retrospective Show Biggest Ever of His Works." June 9, 1956.

_____, "Flora T. L. Sterner." Obituary, May 5, 1982.

Child, Hamilton, Child Gazetteer of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. 1885.

Gibbs, Rebecca Whitehead, Richmond Looks Back. 1936.

The Berkshire Hills. American Guide Series, Federal Writers Project, Works Progress Administration, 1939.

Richmond Vital Records to the Year 1850.

Richmond Town Reports, 1869, 1877, 1885, 1886, and 1887.

87001997

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Nichols-Sterner House
Berkshire County
MASSACHUSETTS

~~Substantive Review~~

Working No. 6/25/86
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 9/20/87
Action: ACCEPT 9-17-87
 RETURN
 REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Well-preserved transitional residence illustrative of changing fashionable architectural styles from Federal to Greek Revival. Initial return comments have been rectified.

Recom./Criteria Accept C
Reviewer Swire
Discipline Architectural History
Date 9/17/87

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name _____

2. Location _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property _____

5. Location of Legal Description _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Nichols-Sterner House 1819 - 1820
Swamp Road
Richmond, MA 01254
James N. Parrish, BCRPC 10 Fenn St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Photo 1 of 4 - Roll 92 - Frame 20
View NE of front facade and West elevation.



Nichols-Sterner House 1819-1820
Swamp Road
Richmond, MA 01254
James N. Parrish, BCRPC, 10 Fenn St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Photo 2 of 4 - Roll 92 - Frame 24
View of front doorway fan and pediment



Nichols-Sterner House 1819 - 1820

Swamp Road

Richmond, MA 01254

James N. Parrish, BCRPC, 10 Fenn St.

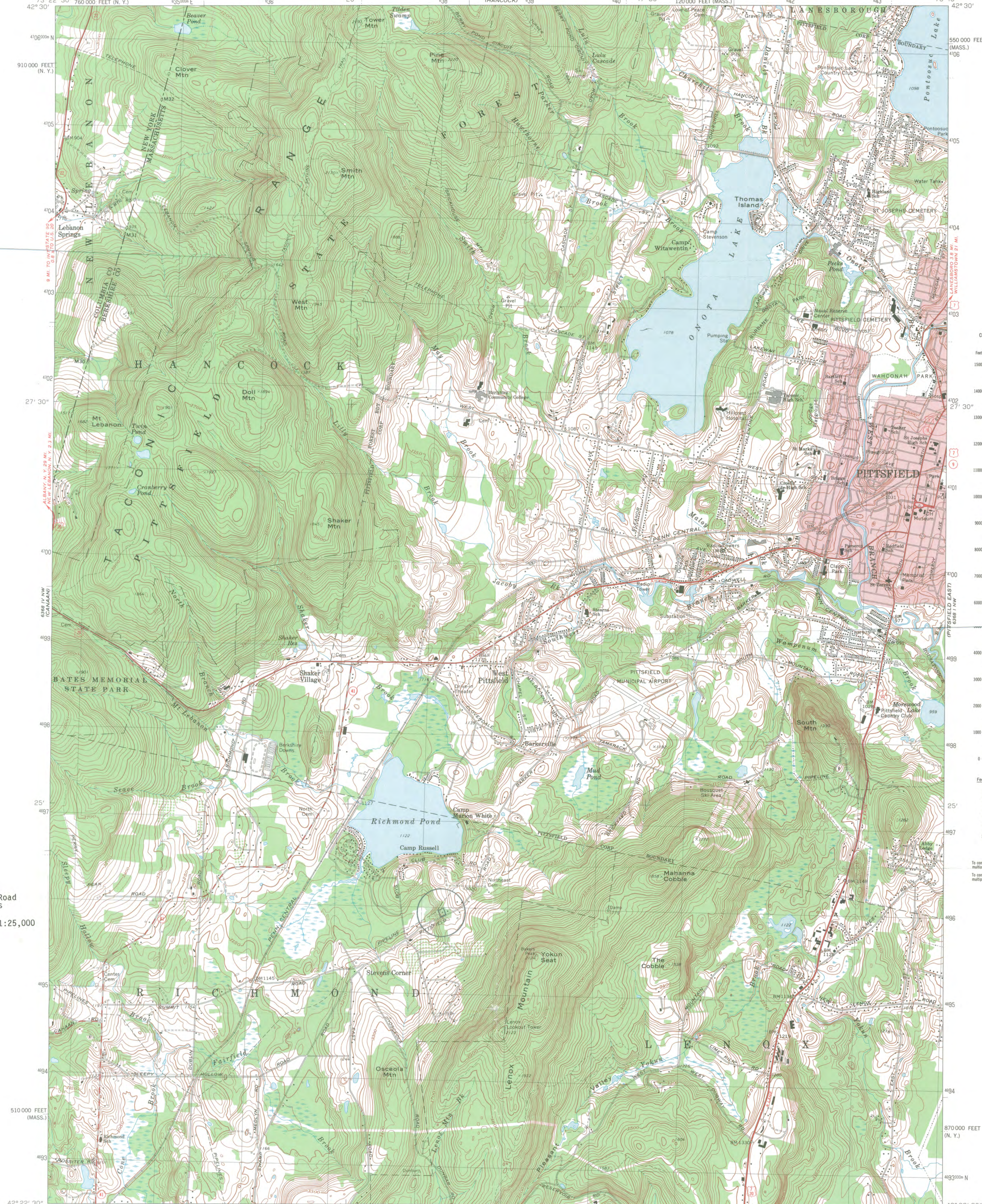
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Photo 3 of 4 - Roll 92 - Frame 23

View NW of Kitchen ell east side of
the house.



Nichols-Sterner House 1819 - 1820
Swamp Road
Richmond, MA 01254
James N. Parrish, BCRPC, 10 Fenn St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Photo 4 of 4 - Roll 92 - Frame 22
View south of rear gable showing 1920's
chimney and wooden ell.



Nichols-Sterner House
Swamp Road/Pittsfield Road
Richmond, Massachusetts

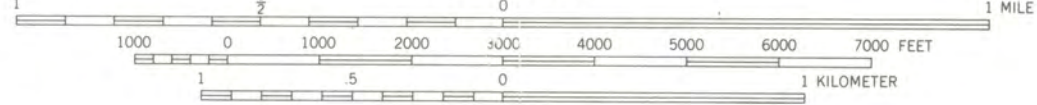
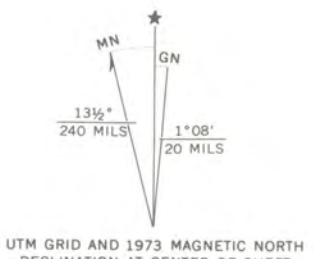
Pittsfield West Quad, 1:25,000
UTM Reference:
18/638250/4615940

UTM correction 12/17/07
18/638281/4616162

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetair surveys 1943-1944. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1973

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and New York coordinate system, east zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVALS 10 AND 20 FEET (SEE DIAGRAM)
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

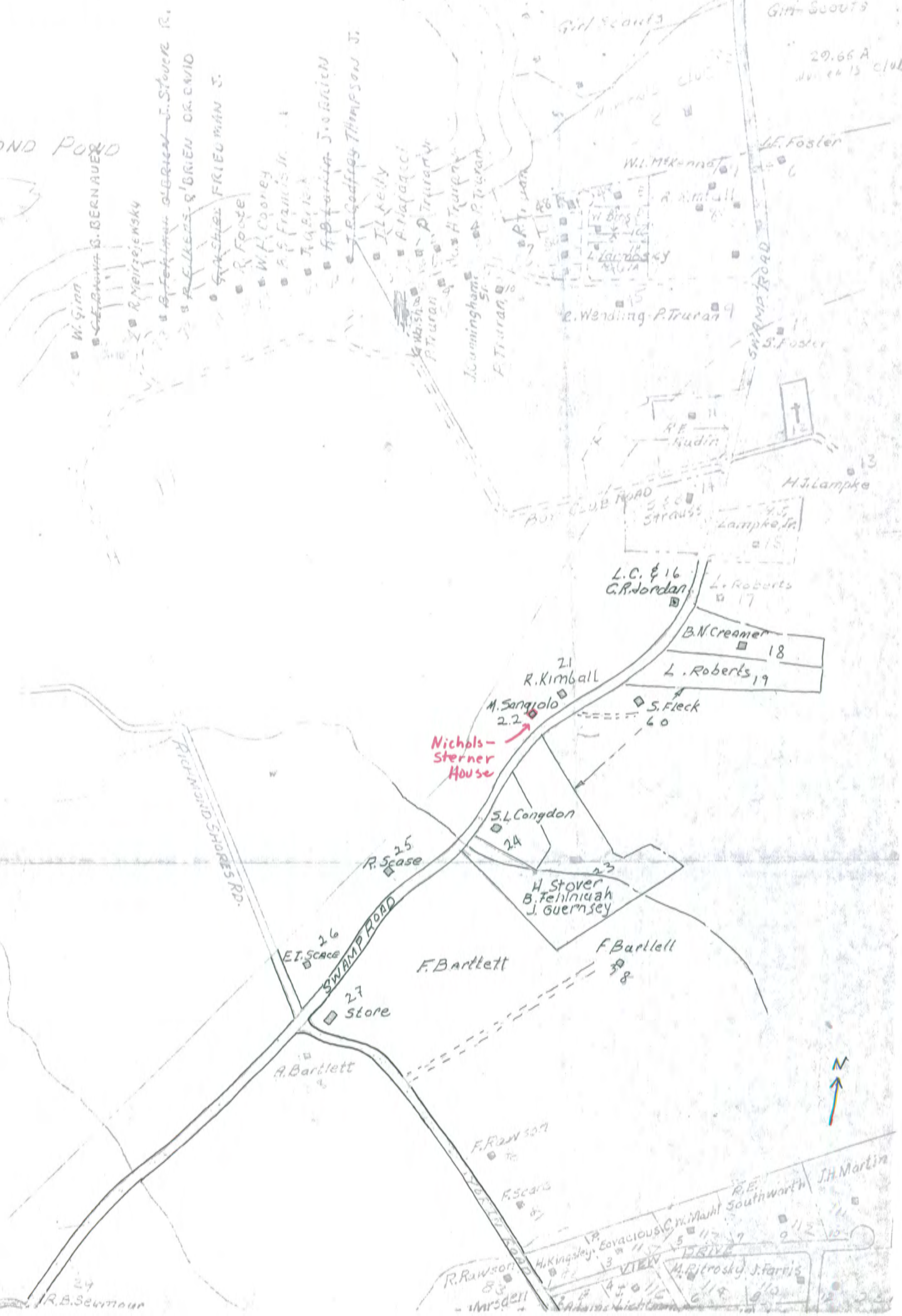
PITTSFIELD WEST, MASS.—N. Y.
N4222.5—W7315/7.5
1973

AMS 6368 IV NE-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

PITTSFIELD

AND POND





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Valerie A. Talmage

Executive Director

State Historic Preservation Officer

July 29, 1987

Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find six nominations that were returned to the MHC for technical and substantive corrections. The following nominations are enclosed:

Boston (Roxbury), Abbotsford, 300 Walnut Avenue
Brockton, Brockton Edison Electric Illuminating Company Power Station
Richmond, Nichols-Sterner House
Westminster, Ahijah Wood House, 174 Worcester Road
Westminster, Nathan Wood House, 164 Worcester Road
Winchendon, Old Centre Historic District

All corrections have been made.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

AUG 6 1987

Massachusetts, the land in Richmond, Berkshire County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, bounded and described as follows:-

That certain piece or parcel of land situated on the northerly side of the highway leading from Pittsfield to Richmond, and bounded northerly, westerly and easterly by land now or formerly of Henry Lamke, and southerly by said highway.

Subject to and together with the rights to draw water from and to maintain, repair, re-lay or reconstruct a pipe conveying water from a spring on the above described premises, which rights are described in the following three instruments: Instrument from William Nichols to Matthew Crittendon dated December 10, 1853 and recorded in the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 136, Page 317; Deed from Flora L. Sterner to Jane Barbour Drexel dated May 1, 1927 and recorded in said Registry in Book 433, Page 425; and Agreement between the said Sterner, Mrs. John Drexel, Jr., A. Stirling Calder and Mathilde Lamke dated August 6, 1928 and recorded in said Registry in Book 439, Page 207.

Excepting from the above described premises and not hereby conveying the property conveyed by Flora L. Sterner, a/k/a, Flora Lash Sterner to Jane Barbour Drexel by deed dated May 1, 1927 and recorded in said Registry at Book 433, Page 452.

the remaining portion

Being/a portion of parcel I of the premises conveyed to the said Flora L. Sterner, a/k/a, Flora Lash Sterner by deed of Helen M. Nichols and Carrie L. Nichols dated October 14, 1925 and recorded in said Registry in Book 426, Page 207.

This deed creates no new boundaries.

Also that piece or parcel of land located in said Richmond, bounded and described as follows:-

Northerly by the Northerly line of Swamp Road, as said road was laid out and established before a portion thereof was relocated and altered by an Order adopted by the County Commissioners of said Berkshire County on March 22, 1955, and a copy of which is recorded in said Registry of Deeds in Book 623, Page 258;

See page 2*****

Westerly by a line which is the extension Southwesterly in a straight line of the Westerly line of the land owned by the Grantee and located on the Northerly side of said Swamp Road;

Easterly by a line which is the extension Southwesterly in a straight line of the Easterly line of the land owned by the said Flora L. Sterner and located on the Northerly side of Swamp Road;

Southerly in part by a portion of the Northerly line of said Swamp Road as the same was relocated and altered by said Order of the County Commissioners dated March 22, 1955 and as above described, and in part by the Northerly line of other land already or formerly owned by the said Flora L. Sterner and located on the Northerly side of said Swamp Road;

Meaning and intending hereby to convey, and hereby conveying, however the same may be described, all that part or portion of Swamp Road as it formerly existed, but which is not included within the limits of said Swamp Road as relocated and altered by said Order of the County Commissioners dated March 22, 1955 as above described, and lying between two lines formed by the extensions Southwesterly in straight lines of the present Easterly and Westerly lines of the land owned by the said Flora L. Sterner and located on the Northerly side of said Swamp Road.

Being the same premises conveyed to the said Flora L. Sterner by Quitclaim deed of the INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF RICHMOND, dated March 19, 1956 and recorded March 22, 1956 in said Registry in Book 638, Page 465&c.

Real Estate taxes for the fiscal year having been apportioned between the parties hereto as of the date hereof, the grantee herein assumes and agrees to pay same.

Witness our hands and seals this 16th day of June, 1981.

Bernie Goodman
Witness:

Lewis T. Jester, Jr.
Lewis T. Jester, Jr.
Co-Conservator

Bernie Goodman
Witness:

Harold Baer
Harold Baer
Co-Conservator

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire, SS.

June 16, 1981

Then personally appeared the above-named LEWIS T. JESTER, JR. and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed, before me,
as Co-Conservator

Bernie Goodman
Notary Public
My Commission Expires: 2/13/84

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire, ss.

June 15, 1981

Then personally appeared the above-named HAROLD BAER and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and