

MAY 15 1989

597

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area Area letter

210

B

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS
MRA

Town Southbridge

Name of area (if any) Maple Street District

Present Use: private residences

General Condition: Good

General date or period ca. 1915-1917

Acreage: 49,594 sq. ft. (1.15 Acres)

Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form

Photo number

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)

UTM Reference

- Ⓐ 18/745 880/4662 060
- Ⓑ 18/745 830/4661 980
- Ⓒ 18/745 760/4662 000
- Ⓓ 18/745 780/4662 110

USGS Quadrangle

Southbridge, Mass-Conn

Scale 1:25,000

Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci

ed. S. Ceccacci
Organization Southbridge Historical Com-
mission

Date May 1986

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

This group of ten well designed, nearly identical, gambrel roofed Colonial Revival cottages are set in a quiet, peaceful setting on a treelined dead-end street. The houses, designed for company foremen, sit gambrel end to the street, five on one side and five on the other. Each is one story in height, with three bay dormers on both sides of the roof creating a full second story in the broad gambrel. All have slate roofs, stucco as the exterior wall fabric and an enclosed porch or sunroom. A plan with the entrance on the side had been often used in the 17th and 18th-centuries in Massachusetts to accommodate a full house on a long narrow urban lot. In Southbridge the same plan had been used as early as the 1870's in cottages built to house American Optical Company employees. The first row of houses built on Benefit Street near the newly opened (1872) Mechanic Street factory was on this side-entrance plan (see form #B-220). Other slightly later cottages (ca. 1880's) in the same area were also built gable end to the street with the entrance on the side (form #B-246). It is interesting to note that Maple Street is separated from that workers' neighborhood only by the railroad tracks which cause Maple Street to end on the north.

(See Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

The Wells family, which owned the American Optical Company at this time, was undoubtedly familiar with progressive early-20th century planning theories for industrial villages. A.B. Wells' father-in-law, Daniel H. Burnham, had put together the first comprehensive city plan for Chicago in 1909. The high quality design and picturesque setting of the Maple Street cottages reflects the latest thinking of the day. As testified to by numerous magazine articles published during this period, it was believed that employees would be more efficient and produce higher quality work if they were provided with ample, good quality housing - a demonstration that their employers valued them as human beings and not just as necessary extensions of the factory machinery.

The construction of clusters of houses by the company for its workers seems to have been a new undertaking for American Optical during this period. It is not even clear whether the company itself had ever built housing for its employees before. During the period around the 1880's and 1890's individual members of the Wells family built rental houses which were likely rented to employees. At an unspecified date, possibly during the early years of the 20th-century, the company acquired houses which it rented to employees. According to local tradition, the company (or members of the Wells family) provided employees with low interest loans for housing construction during the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

At about the same time the Maple Street houses were built, the company also constructed two other housing clusters (Twinehurst, form #A-103 and North Street-Windsor Court, form #B-204). These houses were three family dwellings, also probably architect-designed. Further research of American Optical Company housing is necessary in order to place the construction of these factory housing clusters in their proper perspective.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases

Architectural Record, October 1918, Vol. XLIV #4, p. 321.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Southbridge

Form No:

B-210

Property Name: Maple Street Residen-
tial Area

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

The architects of the Maple Street cottages were Loring & Leland of Boston (Charles C. Loring and Joseph D. Leland). The same firm also designed similar cottages for skilled machinists in Whitinsville, Massachusetts at about the same time. Photographs of a building in each of these two projects were published in a 1918 article in Architectural Record, entitled "The Working Man and His House", as examples of quality factory housing provided by enlightened employers. Like many other examples cited in the article, both were Colonial Revival in style, of frame construction with stucco sheathing and slate roofs.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

The Maple Street District is significant as an example of housing constructed for the workers of the American Optical Company. During the growth of the town's eastern section late in the 19th-century the Wells family and their company built a variety of housing types. Loring & Leland of Boston designed this cluster of ten single-family houses for foreman on a short tree-lined street. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership and historically associated with the properties.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Southbridge MRA
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
51. Kinney, A., House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
52. LaCroix--Mosher House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
53. LaRochelle, Napoleon, Two-Family House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
54. Maple Street Historic District	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
55. Marcy, Mrs. R., House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
56. McKinstry, William, Jr., House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
57. McKinstry, William, Farmhouse	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
58. Morse, H., House	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
59. New York, New Haven & Hartford Passenger Depot	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
60. Notre Dame Catholic Church	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Delores Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Maple Street Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME: Southbridge MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000597

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 6/22/89 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTM's ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed _____ Phone _____

Date _____



Maple Street District
Southbridge, MA MDA
Ceccacci, 1986
Southbridge Historical Commission
Roll #6

SOUTHBIDGE MASS
MAPRA



Maple Street Area

B-210

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294