

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 10 1984

date entered

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

1. Name

historic The Reverend Robie Morrill Property

and/or common Morrill-Lassonde ^{House} Property (preferred) ✓

2. Location

street & number ~~East side of King Street (.5 miles north of inter-~~
~~section of Rts. 3 & 4)~~ N/A not for publication

city, town Boscawen N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state New Hampshire code 33 county Merrimack code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name New Hampshire Art Association

street & number 24 West Bridge Street Box 1075

city, town Manchester N/A vicinity of state New Hampshire 03101

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Merrimack County Courthouse- Registry of Deeds

street & number North Main Street P.O. Box 248

city, town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Morrill-Lassonde House is a two-and-a-half Story, frame dwelling with a gable roof, central chimney, and a foundation of fieldstone and split granite blocks. The house stands on a broad natural terrace overlooking the intervalles or flood plains of the Merrimack River. Standing close to a site long believed to be the location of the first fort in Boscawen, the house is reached by a long driveway which extends easterly from King Street. The dwelling and its accompanying barn are located near a steep embankment which descends to the flood plain below, and are shaded by a number of mature trees.

The house has a 5-bay cladboarded facade, with 12-over-8 window sashes and louvered exterior blinds. The front doorway enters an enclosed one-story porch with a gable roof and a cornice which encloses a triangular pediment. The door has six flat panels, each surrounded by applied Grecian ogee mouldings. The door is flank by five-light sidelights, which in turn are surrounded by flat casings with square corner blocks at the intersection of the side and top members. This feature, in contrast to other exterior details of the house, is Greek Revival in style.

The south side elevation has two 12-over-8 windows on the first and second floors, and a 9-over-6 window in the gable.

The east or rear elevation of the house is intersected by a wing which extends from the northern half of this wall and is covered by a leanto roof. The rear wall of the main body of the house has three 12-over-8 windows on the first floor. On the second floor is a modern three-sided bay window, added in 1938 to provide additional light to an expanded master bedroom, and a 9-over-6 window located in the center bay of the house.

The wing has irregular fenestration. On the south elevation, facing a small enclosed garden which extends along the back of the main house, is a doorway covered by an arched arbor and a bank of windows which light the sunroom. The east or rear elevation of the wing has a three sided bay window near the southeast corner, also lighting the sunroom, and a doorway at the northeast corner, covered by an arbor. Under the eaves, between the tops of the bay window and the doorway, are a pair of casement windows.

The north elevation of the house has irregular window placement consisting of an expanded modern window near the center, lighting a small kitchen; this is flanked by two 12-over-8 windows lighting front and rear rooms. The second story is lighted by two 12-over-8 windows and one 9-over-6 window, while the attic has a single 9-over-6 window in the gable.

The cornice of the house is fully developed, with crown and bed mouldings. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and is pierced by a central chimney of brick which rises through the ridge.

The interior of the house is of a standard eighteenth-century plan, with a single major room on each side of the central chimney and additional rooms extending along the rear of the house behind the chimney.

The original small entry at the front of the house was deepened by the addition of a Greek-Revival style porch in the nineteenth century. The staircase remains unaltered, however, and is a triple run with two landings, ascending from the left-hand (north) wall of the entry. The handrail is a simple rectangular piece mortised into the newel and angle post, and the balusters, rising from a closed string, are simple square rods.

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Continuation sheet #1 DESCRIPTION

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Below the third run of the stairway, at the right of the entry, is a storage closet with a three panel door having unmoulded stiles and rails; this appears to date from the period when the porch was added to the entry.

North of the porch is a room which extends to approximately two-thirds of the depth of the main house. Recently used as a dining room, this chamber has the most elaborate woodwork in the house and was probably the original parlor. The chimney wall is covered with raised panelling of eighteenth-century type, with two horizontal panels above the fireplace opening and the remainder of the wall composed of vertical panels. Around the fireplace opening and the doors is a bolection moulding of moderate width. The northeast corner of the room is filled with a beaufait or cupboard with a panelled lower door, a glazed upper door, and flanking pilasters. Another cupboard is set into the east wall of the room; this also has a panelled lower door and a glazed upper door. The chimney girt is embellished with mouldings and treated as a full cornice. The original plastered ceiling of the room has been removed, exposing joists of small dimensions and an extremely wide hewn summer beam which runs north and south.

South of the entry is a room of some elaboration. This room contains woodwork of several periods, and was brought to its present condition in 1939. The fireplace wall has panelling of the eighteenth-century type, but also contains elements apparently dating from the Greek Revival era. Above the fireplace is a simple mantelshelf supported by a bed moulding of Grecian ovolo profile. On each side of the fireplace are fluted pilasters without entasis and with faceted block capitals, probably suggested by the doorway casing corner blocks or central tablets illustrated in books like Asher Benjamin's The Practical Builder (1830). The doors in this room are also of a nineteenth-century type, with unmoulded stiles and rails and with Norfolk or cast iron latches. The baseboard has a cap moulding of Grecian ogee profile. The south wall of the room has two modern built-in bookcases flanking the central window.

Running along the rear (east) of the main house on the first floor is the original kitchen, more recently used as a parlor with a small modern kitchen at its northern end. This room retains the large cooking fireplace and two brick ovens, with some early paneling in the fireplace area. the remainder of the room is sheathed with pine boards which were removed in 1938 from the former wing attached in the northeast corner of the main house.

The leanto wing of the house contains an entry, pantry, and small stairhall in its northern half, and an entry and well-lighted sunroom in its southern half.

The second floor is composed of bedchambers with relatively simple detailing. The largest room is the bedroom on the south, where a partition was removed in 1938 and a bay window added on the rear (east) wall of the house to create a single large chamber. This room has a simple panelled mantelpiece.

Southeast of the house is a large, one-and-a-half story barn with a gable roof and sliding doors in each gable end. Attached to the northwest corner of the barn is a small gable roofed shed. Extending along the south wall of the barn is a leanto addition which originally contained a series of horse stalls. They have been enclosed by hinged doors, floored over, and converted to a partitioned area which served artist Omer Lassonde as the "Fort Acres Gallery."

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Original appearance: Insofar as its original appearance can be determined, the house appears to have been a rectangular two-story dwelling with a central chimney. The date of the wing is undetermined due to the overlay of modern work. The porch which extended the depth of the original front entry was probably added in the period 1830-1850, as was some of the interior woodwork of the house.

Until it was purchased by the Lassondes and remodelled in 1938, the house had a wing attached to its north wall; this was removed and its boards used as sheathing in converting the original kitchen to a parlor. Also removed was a carriage house which was attached to the east end of the wing; The site of this building was converted to a small yard and flower garden.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1769

Builder/Architect Rev. Robie Morrill

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Morrill-Lassonde House was built about 1769 by Rev. Robie Morrill, minister of Boscawen, and is believed to be the oldest surviving frame dwelling in that town. The house has preserved to a high degree its original configuration and detail, with additional features added by later occupants who achieved prominence in the community and in the fields of art and invention. The property associated with the house is also believed to encompass the site of the first fort in Boscawen, used between 1742 and 1756 for defense against the Indians.

Architecture: The Morrill-Lassonde House is the earliest surviving (and perhaps the first) framed dwelling built in the township of Boscawen, New Hampshire.¹ As such, the house retains in its frame and finish important evidence of the level of craftsmanship available in the upper Merrimack River Valley of New England (still a frontier area) in the mid-1700s. The mid-eighteenth-century woodwork of the house is the best preserved detailing of its kind not only in Boscawen but in the surrounding towns, all of which were among the earliest settlements in the present-day New Hampshire beyond the original seventeenth-century communities of the seacoast. The Morrill-Lassonde House also retains a small amount of Greek Revival detailing which probably dates from the period when the dwelling was owned by clockmaker-inventor Benjamin Morrill; this documents the change in taste of the third generation to occupy the building.

Art: Omer T. Lassonde (1903-1980) the last private owner of the property, was a prominent artist and art administrator who did "more than any other living man to put New Hampshire on the map artistically!"² As an artist, Lassonde received many awards for his paintings, including President's Prizes for color from 1926-1928.³ His painting ranged from portraits to landscapes and were widely exhibited. A painter of international reputation, Lassonde was elected to the prestigious Societe des Artistes Francais in Paris.

Lassonde proved to be equally adept as an administrator, serving as the New Hampshire Federal Arts Program Director under the Works Progress Administration from 1935 to 1942.⁴ At the same time, Lassonde supervised the restoration of murals in the New Hampshire House and the creation of the New Hampshire portion of the Index of American Design.

Invention: Benjamin Morrill (1794-1857), grandson of the Rev. Robie Morrill, the builder of the house, became its second owner and one of the most prominent members of his family. While occupying the house, Morrill was one of two highly inventive clockmakers in Boscawen, the second being his brother-in-law, Joseph Chadwick. Among the original clock designs attributed to Morrill is the "New Hampshire Mirror Clock," so called because it resembles a looking glass of the period with a clock dial in the upper third of the case. This style of clock, highly popular in the 1820s and 1830s, made almost exclusively in New Hampshire and often utilized a simple brass movement today called the "wheelbarrow movement" because of its appearance.⁵ The wheelbarrow movement, strongly associated with Morrill, is notable for the simplicity and economy of its design, its principal function being accurate time-keeping with the use of a minimal amount of brass. Morrill is also recognized for his manufacture of a watchman's clock, a tower clock (still in the church in Dover, N.H.), and a variety of small clocks with varying styles of cases. Morrill also manufactured scales and, during the period from 1840 to 1850, made melodeons, serphines, and other forms of reed organs.⁶

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coffin, Charles. The History of Boscawen and Webster, 1733-1878. Republican Press Association, Concord, N.H. 1878.
 Grover, Kathryn and Mary Rose Boswell. N.H. In the 1930's- The New Deal. N.H. Historical Society, Concord, New Hampshire 1978.

-continued-

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 2.75 acres

Quadrangle name Penacook, N.H.- 15 minute series

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	<u>19</u>	<u>2818</u>	<u>01310</u>	<u>417</u>	<u>918</u>	<u>01511</u>	B						
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing							
C				D									
E				F									
G				H									

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of 2.75 acres on the Boscawen City Assessors map number 81A, a portion of lot #25. It has approximately 300' frontage, and is bordered on the west by King Street, between Queen Street and the intersection of Rts. 3 & 4, and extends

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

-continued-

state	N/A	code	county	code
state	N/A	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen R. Johnson
 organization New Hampshire Art Association date August 9, 1983
 street & number 24 West Bridge Street telephone (603) 622-0527
 city or town Manchester state New Hampshire 03101

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 [Signature]
 Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
 title N.H. State Historic Preservation Officer date JAN 26 1984

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

[Signature] Entered in the National Register date 3/15/84
 for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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FOOTNOTES:

¹Charles Carleton Coffin, The History of Boscawen and Webster from 1733 to 1878 (Concord, New Hampshire: Republican Press Association, 1878), p.85.

²New Hampshire Sunday News, 1947, p. 11.

³New Hampshire Notables (Concord, N.H.: Concord Press, 1955), p.98.

⁴Kathryn Grover and Mary Rose Boswell, New Hampshire in the 1930s (Concord: N.H. Historical Society, 1982), p. 14.

⁵Alan Smith, ed., The Country Life International Dictionary of Clocks (London: Country Life Books, 1979), p. 77.

⁶Charles S. Parsons, New Hampshire Clocks & Clockmakers (Exeter, N.H.: Adam Brown Co., 1976), pp. 148-52, 175-79, 195, and 324.

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Continuation sheet #4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Parsons, Charles S. N.H. Clocks and Clockmakers. Adams Brown Co, Exeter, N.H. 1976.
Rev. Mr. Price. History of Boscawen. Concord, N.H. 1823.

Smith, Alan ed. The Country Life International Dictionary of Clocks. Country Life
Books, London. 1979.

New Hampshire Notables. Concord Press. 1955.

New Hampshire Sunday News. Manchester, N.H. June 15, 1947, p. 11.

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another 1.75 acres to the east until the B & M railroad tracks. The boundaries of
the nominated property are indicated by the heavy black line of the attached sketch
map.

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Continuation sheet #5 SKETCH MAP

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