National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic

and or common Woodchuck Lodge

2. Location

Woodchuck Lodge (John Burroughs Home) National Historic Landmark

Burroughs Road street & number

36

code

city, town Roxbury

_ vicinity of

Delaware

state

DC

New York state

Classification 3.

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	V
district	public	<u> </u>	agriculture	_X museum
⊥X building(s)	private	unoccupied	commercial	_X_ park
structure	_X both	work in progress	educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	in process	_X yes: restricted	government	scientific
	being considered	<u> </u>	industrial	transportation
		`no	military	other:

county

Owner of Property 4.

Multiple name

street & number

city, t	own	vicinity of	state
5.	Location of Le	gal Description	
court	house, registry of deeds, etc.	elaware County Courthouse	
street	t & number		
city, t	own Delhi		state New York
6.	Representation	n in Existing Sur	veys
title	Historic Sites Survey	has this property b	een determined eligible? yes no
date	1975	Χ	_ federal state county local
depos	sitory for survey records Nati	onal Park Service	

not for publication

code

25

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date entered

8. Significance

	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement	literature military music philosophy politics/government	 religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1908-1921	Builder/Architect Curtis	Burroughs	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Woodchuck Lodge and the land immediately surrounding it derive significance from their association with John Burroughs, a naturalist and prolific and influential author. Both, especially the land, became frequent subjects in his later work. Burroughs spent his summers at Woodchuck Lodge from 1910 until his death in 1921. His writings on the out-of-doors were highly popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They stressed the wonders anyone could observe in the commonplace natural phenomena of ordinary environments. They helped arouse public interest in nature and the out-of-doors, and thus were of important influence in the growth of the conservation movement.

Although part of his work was literary criticism, Burroughs gained his greatest fame from writing about nature. Influenced by Thoreau and Emerson, he translated their view of a still rural America into essays that appealed to such early industrialists as Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. Burroughs also became acquainted with such well-known figures in the conservation movement as John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt. His writing was direct, straightforward, and readily comprehensible, which contributed to its broad popular appeal.

His work primarily took the form of essays, which were first published in popular magazines and then compiled into books. Indeed he has been credited as the originator of the nature essay as a literary form. His first essay appeared in the <u>Atlantic Monthly</u> in 1860; the first collection in book form was <u>Wake_Robin</u>, published in 1871.

John Burroughs was born on the homestead farm near Roxbury, New York in 1837. He worked on the farm as a boy, as well as attending school locally. By the age of 17 he was a school teacher in a rural community, interspersing his work with additional study at Ashland Collegiate Institute and Cooperstown Seminary. At the age of 20 he married Ursula North.

In 1863 he gave up teaching and obtained a post as a clerk in the U.S. Treasury Department. In Washington he met, and became a friend and admirer of, the poet Walt Whitman. His first book was also the first published appreciation of

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

<u>10. G</u>	eograp	hical Data		
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rganization	Heritage S	tudies, Inc.	date	July 26, 1985
treet & numb	er RD 6, Bo	x 864 Mapleton Roa	d telepho	ne 609-452-1754
ity or town	Princeton		state	New Jersey
12. St	ate His	storic Pres	ervation Off	icer Certification
he evaluated	significance of	this property within the s	state is:	
	national	state	local	
65), I hereby r ccording to th	nominate this p	roperty for inclusion in th rocedures set forth by th	or the National Historic Pro ne National Register and co ne National Park Service.	eservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89- ertify that it has been evaluated
itle				date
For NPS us I hereby	- /	property is included in th	ne National Register	date 9/10/27
Keeper of J Attest:	the National Re	gister		date

Chief of Registration

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to the 6/6 sash windows. On the interior he added a bath in a space to the right of the dining room and a kitchen in a former passage to the rear. These were fitted with running water, supplied by a gravity system from a spring on the hillside above the house. The large kitchen at the rear, formerly a milk room, was converted to a bedroom, and a woodshed was constructed next to it. He also replaced the roof and flooring on the first floor, and made other structural improvements. Shortly before his death an open pole framed garage shed was constructed west of the house, to provide shelter for cars presented to Burroughs by Henry Ford.

Burroughs also added a Franklin stove, cast in Poughkeepsie, to the dining room, and furnished the house in typical "camp" style, combining old family pieces with rustic furniture made, like the veranda, from sticks and boughs. The house also contains a desk and Victrola cabinet made by his son, Julian. These furnishings and other memorabilia remain in the house, with the addition of a few family pieces brought from the Burroughs homestead.

After John Burroughs death in 1921, the property continued to be used as either a full or part-time residence. A few, relatively minor alterations have been made. The house was supplied with electricity in 1955. Clapboard siding was replaced on the southeast and southwest side of the 2-story section in 1959. In the 1960s the kitchen chimney was replaced by a new one on the exterior of the east side of the wing, and old brick chimneys were taken down above the ridge; the flooring structure over the cellar was also replaced because of moisture damage. In 1976-1977, after preparation of an Historic Structure Report, an underground drainage system was installed and the roof was replaced.

The public was welcomed to the house in John Burroughs' day, a tradition that was continued by succeeding tenants and owners. Since 1975 the house has been owned by a private non-profit group, which opens it to the public on summer weekends.

Of equal or perhaps even more significance than the house is the integrity of the surrounding landscape, a portion of which is owned by public or private non-profit groups dedicated to preserving Woodchuck Lodge and its setting. Above the house is a wooded hillside, once an orchard. The

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spring supplying the house with water is located on its slope, northwest of the house. Although the site of the spring is a contributing feature, the present spring house, constructed of concrete with a metal roof, is non-contributing.

The remainder of the land is in relatively open fields and meadows, some of which are now partially grown up with scrub. These are defined by drylaid stone walls and tree lines, demarcating either property boundaries or old field divisions. Adjacent to the house lot to the east and west are hay fields. Directly across the road from the house is a field that was once an orchard, still marked by a few old apple trees. Adjacent to the west is the so-called "Ford lot," named by Burroughs because it was cleared of rocks with financial assistance from Henry Ford. In gratiitude, inscribed the name "Ford Lot", along with a pointing hand, on a rock on the opposite side of the road, where it can still be seen. The northeast corner of this field was the site of the "Haybarn Study," as its name implies an old barn, in the open doorway of which Burroughs sat and wrote in fine weather.

Approximately 575 feet west of Woodchuck Lodge along the north side of the road is Burroughs Memorial Field, a 3.5-acre parcel belonging to the State of New York. This is the site of John Burroughs' grave. The field is open in the center and wooded at the upper end, with some trees and scrub growth along the road. An entrance through an irregular arrangement of stone walls leads to a cleared path, partially paved in stone that leads up to the grave. The path and grave site are planted with wildflowers. The grave itself, surrounded by drylaid stone walls is placed, as Burroughs wished, below what he termed his "boyhood rock." To this rock is affixed a small bronze plaque by the sculptor Paolo Pietro. The plaque bears a relief of Burroughs seated on the rock, with the inscription "John Burroughs, 1837-1921." The site, like the veranda of Woodchuck Lodge, affords a panoramic view across the valley where the village of Roxbury is located, although not visible from this perspective, to the range of wooded hills beyond. Directly across from the memorial field is the tract Burroughs referred to as the "beech wood lot." This is owned by a descendant.

With the land around Woodchuck Lodge in the hands either of

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organizations dedicated to its preservation or sympathetic private owners, the greatest threat to the preservation of its setting lies in the potential of development of the hills that form its view.

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Whitman's work, entitled <u>Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and</u> <u>Person</u> (1867). He remained close to Whitman until the end of the older man's life, visiting him at his retirement home in Camden, New Jersey. In 1896 he published a full-scale biography, <u>Whitman: A Study</u>.

By 1873 Burroughs was successful enough to leave the Treasury Department and support himself by writing. In 1873 he purchased land on the west bank of the Hudson River near the town of Esopus, south of Kingston. He built a a large house, and cultivated fruit trees, berries, and grapes. In 1881 he erected, about 100 yards from the house, a small 1-room structure, Riverby Study National Historic Landmark, where he did much of his writing. In 1895 he built a small cabin in West Park, Slabsides National Historic Landmark, in the Hudson Highlands west of Riverby. There he spent much of his time (except in the winters), experimenting with raising celery, writing, and entertaining a stream of guests.

In 1908, when friends were looking for a place to rent for the summer, he suggested his brother Curtis's house, then unoccupied. He spent two weeks there with his friends. In 1910 he entered into a rental agreement with his nephew, and in 1913, with financial assistance from Henry Ford, purchased the farm. He had his nephew continue to operate the farm, but retained Woodchuck Lodge for his own use. From then until his death he spent long summers at Roxbury, except when he was traveling. He continued to tramp the fields and woods, observing nature, to write, and to entertain family and friends.

Woodchuck Lodge and its surroundings became familiar to Burroughs' many readers through descriptions and comment in the books and collections of essays written there, including <u>Time and Change (1912), The Summit of the Years (1913), The</u> <u>Breath of Life (1915), Under the Apple Trees (1916), and</u> <u>Under the Maples (1921). Others knew their appearance</u> through an early (1919) color movie of Burroughs in residence at Woodchuck Lodge, shown annually at meetings of the John Burroughs Memorial Association, and through an exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Still others became aware of it through the well-publicized visits of such noted figures as Ford, Edison, and Harvey Firestone.

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His essays were based less on dramatic and exotic phenomena of nature (although he certainly had traveled widely in the west, accompanying Theodore Roosevelt to Yellowstone in 1903) than on the plant, animal, and bird life in the vicinity of his home. Often in these essays he recalled haying the fields as a boy, and tramping the woods. Frequently, as in an essay called "The Circuit of the Summer Hills" in <u>The Summit of the Years</u>, he wrote in lyrical terms about the view from his makeshift writing desk, set up in the doorway of the haybarn study in the Ford lot.

According to his friend and biographer, Clara Barrus, Burroughs selected his burial place because the large rock on the hillside was his boyhood observation post, where, he told her, "I climbed at sundown when a boy to rest from work and play, and to listen to the vesper sparrow sing, and here I hope to rest when my work and play are over -- when the sun goes down -- here by my boyhood rock." (Barrus, John Burroughs, Boy and Man, p. 47.) His granddaughter, Elizabeth Burroughs Kelley, recalled that in his late years the places of great significance to him were the field with his "boyhood rock"; the Ford lot with the hay barn study; the wooded slope above Woodchuck Lodge, which he called the "bush camp," where he sometimes wrote, especially when crowded out of the hay barn by stored hay; the orchard, which formed the foreground of the view from his veranda, and where he would camp out with such guests as Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone; and the beech wood.

Burroughs died in 1921. In 1922 Henry Ford purchased the property from Burrough's son, Julian. Ford's widow sold it back to Julian in 1947, except for the acreage around the "boyhood rock," which went to the State of New York. It then remained in the ownership of members of the Burroughs family until 1953, when most of the farm, with the exception of Woodchuck Lodge and the two acres around it, were sold. Woodchuck Lodge was conveyed to Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. in 1975.



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Bibliography:

- Barker, E. Gilbert, et al. "Woodchuck Lodge. Historic Structure Report" (1977)
- Barrus, Clara. John Burroughs, Boy and Man. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1920
- The Life and Letters of John Burroughs. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1925.
- Kelley, Elizabeth Burroughs. John Burroughs' Woodchuck Lodge. Privately published, n.d.
- Personal communications from Elizabeth Burroughs Kelley and Abraham Hirsch.



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Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Woodchuck Lodge National Historic Landmark includes the following parcels as shown on the tax map of the Town of Roxbury, Delaware County, State of New York: portions of Great Lot 42, Lots 17, 18, 19, 20, and a portion of Great Lot 41 adjacent to Great Lot 42, Lot 20, as well as Lot 21. In addition the boundary includes a 15-foot wide strip covered by a conservation easement along the easterly side of the lot adjacent to Lot 17.

The boundary begins in the center of the Burroughs Road at a point established by the northeast corner of Great Lot 42. Lot 18. It then proceeds southeast approximately 150 feet to the southeast corner of the lot, then southwest approximately 500 feet along the southeasterly boundaries of lots 18 and 19, then in an arc southwesterly approximately 700 feet defining the boundary between cleared land and woodland (as shown on New York State Department Environmental Forest Management Type Map, ELP-5MM-110 of 8/17/71) to the line dividing Great Lots 41 and 42, then northwest along that line approximately 200 feet to the southwest corner of Great Lot 41, lot 21, then southwest approximately 683 feet, west approximately 939 feet and northwest approximately 875 feet along the boundaries of that lot to the center of the road, then east approximately 800 feet following the center of the road to the south corner of Great Lots 41-42, lot 20, then north approximately 350 feet and northeast approximately 273 feet along the lines of that lot, then northeast approximately 600 feet along a line of convenience connecting the north corner of lot 20 with the southwest corner of lot 18, then northeast approximately 670 feet to the northeast corner of an easement adjacent to lot 17, then souhteast along the line of the easement approximately 400 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification :

The land surrounding Woodchuck Lodge is as important as the building. It is John Burroughs' writings about the land and its natural features that has national significance, and the house without its context has a severely diminished meaning.

The landmark boundary includes those lands of particular significance to Burroughs. Although Burroughs, of course,



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knew a great deal of the larger landscape through his farm boyhood, the lands enclosed within the boundary are those he used most often during the years of his residence in Woodchuck Lodge, plus two hayfields. Haying as a boy and young man was also an activity he recalled in his writings. The types of land within the boundary represent the subjects he often described: cleared fields bounded by stone walls, woodland, and uplands as the location of the Boyhood Rock.

mat with Covenant Against Grantor's acts. FORM MASK N. Y. DEED-BARGAIN AND SALEY Box 1/77 2035 TUTOLANX memoran u a tay artist u 609 This Indenture. 465 Made the ? / day of Jecule Nineteen Hundred and Eighty Between JESSIE P. SEARS, residing at Burroughs Memorial Rosd, Town of Roxbury, County of Delaware, State of New York. party of the first part, and WOODCHUCK LODGE, INC., s non-profit organization, with its principal office at Roxbury, Delaware County, New York. party of the second part, Witnesseth that the party of the first part, in consideration of One _____ Dollar (1.00) lawful money of the United States, and other good and valuaboe consideration paid by the party of the second part, usus nervey grant unrecease unto the party of the second part, ---- Dollar party A parcel of unimproved agricultural land south of Burroughs Memorial Road, Town of Roxbury, Delaware County, New York, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a point in the center of Burroughs Memorial Road at the northeasterly corner of the lands of Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. and the northwesterly corner of Jessie P. Sears thence running southerly slong the center of a stone wall a distance of approximately 320 feet to an obtuse angle in said wall; thence southeasterly continuing on the center of said wall a distance of approximately 130 feet to an obtuse angle; thence continuing on the center of said stone wall southerly a distance of approximately 120 feet to an unmarked point; thence easterly a distance of approximately 620 feet to a point westerly of the center of a stone base farm road running north and south; thence northerly along a line 15 feet west of the center of said road a distance of approximately 550 feet to the center of Burroughs Memorial Road; thence westerly slong the center of Burroughs Memorial Road approximately 830 feet to the point or place of beginning. Containing 9.1 acres be the same more or less. Being a portion of the premises conveyed by Samuel Levine and Florence Levine to Jessie P. Sears by deed dsted January 13, 1951 and recorded January 13, 1951 in the Delaware County Clerk's Office in Liber 309 of Deeds at page 305. This conveyance is subject to the following deed restrictions: 1. Said land to be used for residential, agricultural and/or so-called "Living History" type interpretive educational programs. 2. No junk cars or unlicensed vehicles, no trailers nor mobile homes shall be sllowed to remain on the premises for a period longer than ten (10) days. No junkyard nor dump of any kind is to be permitted. 3. 2.5 scres shall be the minimum plot size for each residence, if any. Any residence, sgricultural or educational structure shall be of design and construction appropriate to the historical nature of the area. 4. No farm animals to be harbored, but small domestic animals and saddle horses and ponies, properly controlled, are permitted. 5. Sewage and waste disposal shall be constructed so as not to contaminate abutting property or water sources, in accord with locs1 and state health regulations. 6. Trespass by the public at large is not to be permitted, how-ever such prohibition shall not preclude authorized usage during and/ or for historical/educational programs sponsored by Woodchuck Lodge, Ing.

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FORM 655X N Y. DEED-BARGAIN AND HALE TUTBLANE MONTANE U & PAT MITTE u 609 -655 Chis Indenture 10 25 Ep ... 7 JUL 3 1981 1:25 p.m Delaware County Clerk's Office mand a to 3 an a Judy 1181 a 1:25P a mand a to 1009 a ______ Decda a to 655 as Made the 15th day of June Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-one Between JESSIE P. SEARS, residing at Burroughs Memorial Road, Town of Roxbury, County of Delaware, State of New York, Latt E there Clark Ropbury, N. Y. 12474 party of the first part, and WOODCHUCK LODGE, INC., a non-profit organization, with its principal office at Roxbury, Delaware County, New York, part y of the second part, Witnesseth that the party of the first part, in consideration of - - - ONE - - - - - - - - - - - Dollar (\$1.00 ۱ lawful money of the United States. paid by the part y of the second part, do os hereby grant and release unto the part y of the second part, its successors and assidns forever parts. A parcel of undeveloped land gouth of Burroughs Memorial Road in the Town of Roxbury, Delaware County, New York, mainly in Lot 226 and a small portion of Lot 225 of Great Lot 42 of the Hardenburgh Patent, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a point in the center of the corner of a stone wall on the westerly boundary of Lot 225 and the easterly boundary of Lot 226 a distance of approximately 290 feet northerly of the southeasterly corner monument of Lot 226 and the southwesterly corner of Lot 225 on the northerly boundary of lot 227; thence northeast a distance of approximately 15 feet to the edge of a northerly directed farm road, said edge being not less than 15 feet southwesterly from the center of said road; thence northerly and northeasterly along the westerly edge of said farm road and not less than 15 feet westerly of the centerline of said farm road approximately 550 feet to the intersection with a crossroad with approximately N. 6° W. direction; thence northerly at a distance of not less than 15 feet westerly of said crossroad to a point approximately 550 feet southerly of the centerline of said Burroughs Memorial Road; thence westerly for a distance of approximately 620 feet to a pin in the center of a southerly directed stone wall to a point 230 feet north of a north corner of the easement made in favor of the Estate of Helen Anna Shepard and the junction of a continuing stone wall on bearing S. 58° 49' East; thence southerly along the center of said stone wall a distance of approximately 230 feet to an obtuse corner; thence running southeasterly along the center of said stone wall a distance of approximately 525 feet to an obtuse angle in the wall; thence continuing on the center of the said stone wall 5. 82° 56' 41" E. a distance of approximately 306.19 feet to the point or place of beginning, containing 7 acres be the same more or less. Being a portion of the premises conveyed by Samuel Levine and Florence Levine to Jessie P. Sears by deed dated January 13, 1951 and recorded January 13, 1951 in the Delaware County Clerk's Office in Liber 309 of Deeds at page 305. This conveyance is subject to the following deed restrictions: 1. Said land to be used for residential, agricultural and/or so-called "Living History" type interpretive educational programs.

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2. No junk cars or unliconsed vohicles, no trailers nor mobile homes shall be allowed to remain on the premises for a period longer than ten (10) days. No junkyard nor dump of any kind is to be parmitted.

3. 2.5 acros shall be the minimum plot size for each residence, if any. Any residence, agricultural or educational structure shall be of design and construction appropriate to the historical nature of the area.

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4. No farm animals to be harborod, but small domestic animals and saddle horses and ponics, properly controlled, are permitted.

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5. Sowage and waste disposal shall be constructed so as not to contaminate abutting property or water sources, in accord with local and state health regulations.

6. Traspass by the public at large is not to be permatted, however such prohibition shall not preclude authorized usage during and/or for historical/educational programs sponsored by Woodchuck Lodge, Inc.

There is also conveyed the following described premises, which was a gift from Jessie P Sears to Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. on December 31, 1980;

"In order to assist and promote the preservation of the visual scene as viewed from Woodchuck Lodge I will make a gift valued at \$5,000.00 of my development rights to that strip of woodlot that extends northerly from Burroughs Memorial Road along an existing stone wall between my lands and those of the Roxbury Burroughs Club, being in width 15 feet easterly from the conter of the stone wall and extending the full length of the property line between my lands and those of The Roxbury Burroughs Club. This gift includes the right of Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. to maintain and/or replace the existing plantings end to maintain the stone wall, as may best suit the historical purposes of Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. With this gift I relinquish my right to dovelop this portion of my lands and my rights to thin, cut or harvest the tree growth within this area, and, further, to leave the stone wall undisturbed. The relinquishment of these rights shall run with the land.

In addition I shall grant, as a gift to Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. the spring rights, of or as available, to a spring that lies on my lands northerly of those of Woodchuck Lodge, Inc., in common with others, together with the right to enter upon the promises upon which said spring is situate for the purpose of laying, relaying, inspecting, repairing and maintaining a pipe line below the surface of the ground from said spring to the premises of Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. upon condition the said lands be restored to original condition in the event that the same are disturbed due to said repair or replacement of said water pipe. The approximate location of the spring is indicated on the stached map for information rather than for exact location. I value this gift at \$1,000.00."

This deed is for the purpose of correcting a deed dated December 31, 1980, and recorded in the Delaware County Clerk's Office on December 31, 1980; in Liber 605 of Deeds at page 435 to include the spring rights and a small parcel connected therewith.

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this all a



WOODCHUCK LODGE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK (Source: Barker (1977)



WOODCHUCK LODGE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK, Roxbury, New York (Source: Town of Roxbury Tax Map, part of Great Lots 41 and 42 of the Hardenburgh Patent).

