

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| STATE:<br><b>Massachusetts</b> |      |
| COUNTY:<br><b>Middlesex</b>    |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY               |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER                   | DATE |
|                                |      |

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Parsonage of Eliot Church (Federated) of South Natick**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Horatio Alger House**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**16 Pleasant Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Natick**

STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE:      COUNTY: **Middlesex** CODE:     

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)           |  | OWNERSHIP                                   |  | STATUS   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC                |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| District <input type="checkbox"/> | Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public <input type="checkbox"/>             | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> | Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>           | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| Site <input type="checkbox"/>     | Structure <input type="checkbox"/>           | Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In Process <input type="checkbox"/>          | Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Object <input type="checkbox"/>   | Both <input type="checkbox"/>                | Both <input type="checkbox"/>               | Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>    | Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> | Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>   |
|                                   |  |   |  |  | No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural     Government     Park     Transportation     Comments

Commercial     Industrial     Private Residence     Other (Specify)     \_\_\_\_\_

Educational     Military     Religious     \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment     Museum     Scientific     \_\_\_\_\_

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
**Eliot Church (Federated) of South Natick**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**49 Eliot Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Natick** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE:     

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Natick Town Hall**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Natick** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE:     

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1/2-acre**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:      Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:     

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Massachusetts**  
COUNTY: **Middlesex**  
ENTRY NUMBER:      DATE:

7. DESCRIPTION

|           |   |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|           | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>          | Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/>  | Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>             | Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> | Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/> |
| INTEGRITY | (Check One)                                 |  |                                | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>       | Moved <input type="checkbox"/> | Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Parsonage of Eliot Church is a two-story, white clapboard structure with a gable roof and two interior chimneys. It has five bays on its southwest, or front, elevation. A wooden single-story porch with a hipped roof and four square columns extends across almost the whole length of this elevation. The doorway, which has sidelights but no transom, is at the center of the porch. The southeast elevation of the main section has a bay window on the first floor, two windows on the second floor, and a single window in the gable end. A two-story ell projects from the northern portion of the rear of the house. A small single-story section with a shed roof stands in the corner formed by this ell. At the end of the ell is a garage, which opens toward the southeast. The northwest elevation has five bays. The second story of the ell is lower than that of the main section.

The front doorway opens into a stair hall. To the southeast is the parlor which has a bay window and a wood mantle with a brick hearth. Northeast of (or behind) the hall is a room which may have served as a bedroom. Northwest of the hall is the dining room, behind which is a large kitchen which extends into the ell. All of the formal rooms of the house have chair rails.

Upstairs, the main section contains two large bedrooms at the northwest and southeast ends of the house. The ell contains two smaller rooms, a bath, and a flight of backstairs. The attic is a single large room with two windows, one of which is boarded up.

The house is said to have been built around 1820. During the mid-nineteenth century the window sashes were probably replaced and the porch and bay window added. Changes believed to have occurred since the time of Alger's association with the house include: the closing off of a fireplace and door in the kitchen, which has probably been enlarged as well as modernized; the installation of narrow board flooring over the original floors in all rooms except the smaller of the two chambers in the second story of the ell; the installation of a new closet in the northwestern bedroom; and the addition of the garage.

The house is used as the parsonage of Eliot Church, as it was in Alger's time. At present, however, the church is without a pastor, and a temporary resident uses some of the rooms of the Parsonage.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century   
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|                |              |                                     |                |                          |                 |                          |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Aboriginal     | Education    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric    | Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Religion/Phi-  |                          | Other (Specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic       | Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | losophy        | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |
| Agriculture    | Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Science        | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |
| Art            | Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Sculpture      | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |
| Commerce       | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Social/Human-  |                          | _____           |                          |
| Communications | Literature   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | itarian        | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |
| Conservation   | Military     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Theater        | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |
|                | Music        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____           |                          |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The historical importance of Horatio Alger cannot be gauged by the conventional methods of criticism, for a few would maintain that his work had genuine literary merit. Yet in such tales as Ragged Dick (1867), Alger presented his juvenile audience with an absorbing dramatization of many of the key assumptions of his sentimental and materialistic age. As one writer has remarked, he "was the most successful writer of boy's stories in the whole of American Literature. An entire generation was indoctrinated by him in the comforting assurance that virtue is always rewarded by wealth and honor."<sup>1</sup> Although Alger's works are now read only by specialists, they have left a profound though intangible mark on American history.

Alger spent his summers at the Parsonage of Eliot Church from 1866 to 1877, after which he went West for almost two years. He then resumed his practice of summering at the Parsonage, and retired there in 1898. As his health failed he moved with his sister to another house in Natick, where he died in 1899.<sup>2</sup>

The Parsonage appears to be relatively unchanged since Alger's time. The house stands in a scenic setting near the Charles River.

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1 Johnson, Vol. I, p. 178

2 Information as to the years Alger spent at the Parsonage provided by Max Goldberg (former President of the Horatio Alger Society) 728 Wooster Road, South Natick, Massachusetts.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Johnson, Allen, Dictionary of American Biography, N.Y: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1928, Vol. I, pp. 178-179.

Kunitz, Stanley J. and Howard Haycroft, N.Y: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1938, pp, 24-25.

Mayes, Herbert R., Alger, 1928.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |          |         |         | O<br>R  | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE |         |         |          |         |         |           |         |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE |         |         |         | LONGITUDE  |         |         | LATITUDE |         |         | LONGITUDE |         |
|  | Degrees  | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes  | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes  | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes   | Seconds |
| NW   | °        | '       | "       | °       | '  | "       | °       | '        | "       | °       | '         | "       |
| NE   | °        | '       | "       | °       | '  | "       | 42      | 16       | 15      | 71      | 18        | 54      |
| SE   | °        | '       | "       | °       | '  | "       |         |          |         |         |           |         |
| SW   | °        | '       | "       | °       | '  | "       |         |          |         |         |           |         |

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Edmund Preston, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service**      DATE: **7/20/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**801 - 19th Street N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **D.C.**      CODE:

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| STATE            |      |
| Massachusetts    |      |
| COUNTY           |      |
| Middlesex        |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE |
|                  |      |

(Number all entries)

Parsonage of Eliot Church(federated)of South Natick

8. Significance

( Horatio Alger House )

BIOGRAPHY

Horatio Alger was born in 1834 in Revere, Massachusetts. His father, a Unit<sup>e</sup>rian minister, excercised unusually strict discipline over his son. Young Alger attended Gates Academy and then Harvard, graduating in 1852. After three years as a tutor and journalist, he was persuaded to enter Harvard divinity school. He completed the course in 1860, but did not immediately enter the ministry. Instead he went to Paris, and upon his return took up tutoring again for a time. Alger was ordained in 1864, and served as a minister in Brewster for two years, after which he went to New York.

Alger had long desired to become a great writer, and had published his first book as early as 1856. But he did not achieve recognition until 1867, when he published a juvenile short story entitled "Ragged Dick", a tale of an impecunious but plucky urchin. The popularity of this story led Alger to extend it into a serial, publish it as a book, and then to imitate it in a long series of similar works, such as Tattered Tom (1871). Becoming associated with Charles O'Connor's charitable Newsboy's Lodging House, Alger gained a deep sympathy for the city's underprivileged boys and a thorough knowledge of their lives. Although he drew on this knowledge, his writings were not realistic, but were sentimental adventures in which virtue was invariably rewarded with material success. His works both reflected and reinforced the prevailing spirit of the age, and they secured for him the reputation of a sage and saint.

Despite his fame, Alger remained profoundly unhappy. He dissipated the income from his works by prodigality and generosity. A Chinese boy whom he adopted was killed in an accident. He fell in love with a married woman and pursued her to France, only to experience a rejection which for a time destroyed his precarious mental balance. Following the death of his friend O'Connor, he was increasingly alone. In 1898, Alger went to live with his sister in Natick, Massachusetts, and died there the following year.