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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG - 8 1986
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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Historic Resources of the Town of Washington, Massachusetts (partial inventory: historical and archaeological resources, ca. 1765-1900)

and/or common Washington Multiple Resource Area

2. Location

street & number Washington, Massachusetts (See Data Sheet) N/A not for publication

city, town Washington N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Berkshire code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	_X_ agriculture	_X_ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	_X_ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	_X_ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	_X_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	_X_ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	_X_ government	___ scientific
_X_ multiple resource area	N/A ___ being considered	_X_ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	_X_ other: meeting hall

4. Owner of Property

name Various: see property owners list

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Park Row

city, town Pittsfield state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Cultural Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts #s 1-5, 7-11, 14-15, 20 has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _X_ no

date 1981 ___ federal _X_ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

UPPER HISTORIC DISTRICT
DATA SHEET

Map #	Historic Name	Name	Date of Construction	Style
901	Town Pound	Washington Mtn. Road	1779	
902	First Meetinghouse Site	Washington Mtn. Road	1773 (demolished)	
1	Jasper Morgan Tavern	Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1810	Federal/ Greek Rev.
2	Washington Town Hall	Washington Mtn. Road	1848-1849	Greek Rev.
801	Town Cemetery	Washington Mtn. Road	1776-1984	
3	Elijah Crane House	Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1785-1789	Federal
A		Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1970	NC
B		Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1960	NC
C		Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1925	NC
D		Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1970	NC
E		Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1955	NC

Continued

LOWER HISTORIC DISTRICT
DATA SHEET

Map #	Historic Name	Street	Date of Construction	Style
7	Richmond-Foster-Corey House	Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1788-1803	Federal
8	Clark-Strong-Abbott House	Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1799-1800	Federal
8a	Clark-Strong Abbott Barn	Washington Mtn.	19th c.	
9	Hiram Savory House	Washington Mtn. Road	ca. 1783-1802	Federal cottage
10	William Millekan House	Washington Mtn.	ca. 1765-1783	Georgian

INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES

4	St. Andrew's Chapel	Washington Mtn. Road	1899	Gothic Revival
5	South Center School	Washington Mtn. Road	1880	Greek Revival
11	Deming-Root-Messenger-Schultz Farm	Lovers Lane Rd.	ca. 1807-1811	Federal
14	Philip Eames House	Stone House Road	1843	Federal
15	Sibley-Corcoran House	Valley Road	ca. 1810-1816	Federal/ Greek Revival
20	Clark-Eames House	Middlefield Rd.	ca. 1782-1797	Federal cottage

7. Description

Washington Multiple Resource Area--Overview, Washington, Mass.

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Washington, Massachusetts, Multiple Resource Area encompasses the geographical and political boundaries of the town of Washington, located in central Berkshire County. Comprising almost 39 square miles, Washington is bounded by eight towns: north by Pittsfield, Dalton, Hinsdale, and Peru; west by Lenox and Lee; south by Becket; and east by Middlefield (the latter in Hampshire County). The Washington Multiple Resource Area contains two districts and six individual properties for a total of fourteen extant historically and architecturally significant historic resources. The districts include five recent intrusions. In addition, the Multiple Resource Area contains several surface and subsurface remains significant to Washington's past.

Topography

Washington is located in the rugged eastern uplands of Berkshire County. In the near center of the town is Washington Mountain, a high rolling plateau drained by fifteen brooks. Elevations range from 1,200 feet to 2,170 feet. A long valley hugs the mountain on the east, while on the west a second summit, October Mountain, rises to a height of 1,948 feet. The geologic structure of the town is primarily gneiss, with considerable quartz rock in the western portion. Washington's most valuable resource has been its forest products. Large portions of its forest were cut in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when much of the town's acreage was taken up by farms and cleared land. Today the town is again heavily forested with a secondary growth of northern hardwoods, red spruce, and oak trees. The majority of the town's 39 square miles are taken up by the 11,947-acre October Mountain State Forest, located in the western section of the town, and the 4,600-acre Pittsfield Water Shed.

The elevation of the historic Town Center (nominated to the National Register as the Upper Historic District) on Washington Mountain is 1,990 feet, while the second node of settlement, nominated as the Lower Historic District, stands on a terrace at 1,600 feet. Historically there were six great ponds in Washington; four reservoirs, all manmade, were constructed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, bringing the total number of large bodies of water to ten.

Historic Overview

Washington today is a sparsely settled town in a rather isolated section of central Berkshire County. Its present population is just slightly over 500 persons. Washington's historical development has been determined by a combination of topographical, geographical, political, economic, and social

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factors. Following the town's initial settlement near the highest point of Washington Mountain, between 1757 and 1761, Washington was called Watsontown, Greenock, and Hartwood. By March 1795 the present town bounds were established by a map drawn by Daniel Wilcox, and a tiny town center had emerged along the plateau near the Washington Mountain summit. Settlement stretched in a linear fashion down the mountain. The first town roads were laid out in 1763. On March 18, 1766, it was "Voted that Mr. George Sloan be appointed an agent to keep in repair the County Road through the town of Hartwood and voted tax to defray these expenses." Growth was slow during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Most of the town's occupants engaged in agricultural pursuits, farming and grazing their animals in the fields along Washington Mountain Road that by ca. 1800 had been cleared of its thick forest cover. The soil was poor and the climate harsh, and by the 1840s, the farmers had begun to leave the area. With the development of the Western Railway in 1841, the center of commerce shifted from the mountain to the summit cut that became Washington Station or "Washington City," as the farmers on their widely scattered plots referred to it. The population reached its peak in 1855, 1,068 persons, largely due to the influx of laborers after the completion of the Western Railway in 1841. Shortly thereafter, railroad officials decided to move their line's center of operations from Washington to Chester; the town's population began a decline from which it is only just emerging, despite a brief period at the turn of the century when Washington enjoyed popularity as the site of summer retreats for the wealthy. From a population of around 300 at its nadir, Washington is beginning to grow again, this time as a rural town serving the commercial and industrial center of Pittsfield to the northwest.

A description of all contributing buildings within the Multiple Resource Area follows. Residential structures, which predominate in the nomination, are discussed first, in chronological order. Nonresidential structures, again arranged chronologically, follow.

Colonial Period (1760-1775)

Only one building survives in Washington from the colonial period, the William Milliken Farm, Washington Mountain Road (Lower Historic District, MHC #10). The house, which faces northeast, was built ca. 1765. It is a simple, five-bay clapboarded structure, 2 1/2 stories in height, and rests on a brick foundation. The central entrance's six-panel door, approached by a granite stoop, is fully but plainly enframed with flat boards and is topped by a five-light transom. Windows are original, simply enframed, with 12/9 sash on the first story, 6/9 on the second. Narrow corner boards and a plain cornice frame the building, and the gable ends bear short cornice returns. A narrow, off-center chimney may be a 19th century alteration. Late 19th century

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photographs show a secondary entrance without overlights on the building's south side--this has since been removed. Fenestration has also been altered on both north and south elevations; otherwise, the building is essentially intact.

Federal Period (1776-1830)

The majority of Washington's residential buildings were erected during the Federal period, the tiny town's initial period of growth. Generally, they are five-bay structures, either 1 1/2 or 2 1/2 stories. Within the Lower Historic District on Washington Mountain Road are: the Hiram Savory House (ca. 1783, MHC #9), a simple three-bay cottage, 1 1/2 stories high, with a side ell; the Richmond-Foster-Corey House (ca. 1785, MHC #7), a much larger 2 1/2 story Federal-style house with central, side-lit entrance and an integral lean-to; and the Clark-Strong-Abbott-Pomeroy House (ca. 1799-1800, MHC #8), five bays wide, 2 1/2 stories high, with simple Federal styling and a 1 1/2 story rear ell. The latter at one time also served as a tavern. While all three buildings have sustained some changes in fenestration--including the installation of a bay window on the southern elevation of the Richmond-Foster-Corey House and the possible replacement of a second-story Palladian-style window on its main facade's central bay with the present paired 6/1 sash--their form, fabric, and styling remain largely intact. Narrow corner boards and cornices as well as door and window enframements have been retained. All three properties also have original barns.

In the Upper Historic District, the historic center of Washington, stand two Federal-period structures that display characteristics of both the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The Elijah Crane House, Washington Mountain Road (ca. 1785-1789, altered ca. 1840, MHC #3), was originally a five-bay, central-entry building, 1 1/2 stories in height. It was substantially enlarged in the mid 19th century when four bays, including a second doorway, were added at the house's eastern end. At one time, an L-shaped formation of shed and barn were also attached at the eastern end of the building. These have since been demolished. A wagon shed formerly stood at the building's eastern end (there are no remains). At present, the building is in rather deteriorated condition. It is sheathed in shingles and its roofing material is sheet metal. It retains 9/6 windows in most of its original portion (others are 2/2 sash), flanking a four-panel entry door. A cinderblock chimney in the original part of the building is a later replacement. Windows in the eastern, newer section of the building are 2/1 on the first story; the second story contains two 1/1 sash windows in the frieze band (now covered with shingles). The addition also contains a nine-light door.

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Also in the Upper Historic District is the Jasper Morgan Tavern (ca. 1810, MHC #1), a large, 1 1/2-story, five-bay structure with a single-story ell at its southern end. The building at various times served as tavern, stage stop, farmstead, and summer house. Despite several 19th century alterations and its present poor condition, the building remains a good vernacular example of Federal styling. The narrow cornice and corner boards, shallow returns on the end gables, and 6/6 sash on all fenestration but the second story's east elevation are original. On the second story, five small 3/3 windows are set flush with the cornice. A pair of narrow interior end-wall chimneys may also be original. In the mid- to late-19th century, a single-story shed-roofed porch with plain, low rail was added across the full front elevation and around to the southern side of the building. A large barn formerly located northwest of the house is no longer standing, nor is a single-story woodshed that at one time extended from the building's kitchen (southern) ell.

Of the three other Federal-period buildings nominated within the Multiple Resource Area, one, the Clark-Eames House on Middlefield Road in the southeastern corner of Washington (ca. 1782, MHC #20), is the most modest example. It is a simple, 1 1/2-story cottage, five bays wide, with a central entrance. A large brick chimney with modern cap is centered in front of the ridge. In the late 19th century, a Queen Anne-style portico with enclosed pediment and carved brackets was added above the entryway.

On Lovers Lane Road, northeast of the Lower District, stands the Deming-Root-Messenger-Schultz House (ca. 1807-1811, MHC #11), a 2 1/2-story Federal farmhouse. It is a five-bay-wide, central-entrance-plan structure, one room deep. A row of dentils emphasizes the cornice on all sides of the building. 2/2 windows (a late 19th century alteration) and a door containing a pair of long, narrow glass panes (also 19th century) are simply enframed. There is a single narrow brick chimney centered on the ridge. Despite the presence of aluminum siding and asphalt shingles sheathing the exterior, the building retains much of its integrity.

The Sibley-Corcoran House, on Valley Road, just to the northeast of the Upper Historic District (ca. 1810-1816, MHC #15), was originally a five-bay Federal-style house not unlike others in the community, with central entrance and 6/6 fenestration. In the 1820s, however, the building received Greek Revival surface treatments, including the addition of broad entablature with cornice and frieze, and enclosed pediments. Enclosed entry porches resting on granite now cover both the main entryway and a secondary entrance on the building's southern side. In addition, there is a shed-roofed ell at the rear of the building. These three elements may have been added in the late 19th century. A modern garage stands behind the house.

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Early Industrial Period (1830-1875)

Washington's most imposing and best-preserved residence is the Phillip Eames House, Stone House Road (1843, MHC #14). With its five-bay, central entrance, double-pile plan, the Phillip Eames House is similar to many of its neighbors. Yet its execution in stone and its fine detailing make the building a far more imposing structure than others in the area. It was built of quarried irregularly-coursed granite, block cut at nearby Summit Rock during the construction of the Western Railway in the late 1830s and early 1840s. The house is 2 1/2 stories, with twin end chimneys, also of stone. Federal in plan and form, it also displays Greek Revival details. The centrally placed front entryway features a full-length side-lit entrance framed by four tapered smooth-cut granite pilasters and surmounted by a shallow, elliptical fan. A granite segmental arch with keystone completes the entrance surround. Windows throughout are topped by rectangular, smooth-cut granite blocks and rest on narrow granite sills. Fenestration is 6/6 sash. An enclosed pediment (also granite) contains a pair of small attic vent windows. Just beneath the northern gable pediment is a small marble date stone bearing the inscription "P. Eames 1843." Wood paneling on the building's interior is thought to have come from the home of Anthony Eames, Phillip's father. The latter home was built at a nearby location in 1764 and survived into the early 20th century--its stone foundation survives and the site can be said to hold archaeological potential.

The Washington Town Hall (MHC #2) stands on the east side of Washington Mountain Road. It is a one and-a-half story Greek Revival-style building, three bays wide, with a central entrance. The structure is framed by cornices, corner boards, and shallow returns, and rests on a granite foundation. Set within the front-facing gable is a small Queen Anne-style window with leaded panes, a later addition. A small, simple portico shelters the entrance. Inside it retains its original board slips, rostrum, and voters' rail. During the Second World War, the building was used as an Air Observers' Station, and a small square tower was added to the roof; this has been removed. Presently it is under the care of the Washington Historical Commission, who maintain the building for the Town of Washington. Preserved in the former town hall are most of Washington's town records, memorabilia, and archives. The Anthony Eames monument, 1808, a cenotaph commemorating an early resident who died when he was crushed by an overturned sleighload of shingles, has been housed in the town hall since the 1950s.

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)

Few residential buildings were constructed during this period, which was marked by Washington's continued decline. Two nonresidential structures of note were erected, however. The South Center School House, on Washington Mountain Road (1880, MHC #5), is the last remaining one-room schoolhouse in Washington. A late Greek Revival-style building, the school rests on a

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fieldstone foundation. Its asymmetrically placed doorway is surmounted by a broad lintel. Two windows light the facade: one, a small four-pane fixed window, is located beside the entry; the other, a round light, is centered in the gable end. The side elevations are two bays deep, with 6/6 sash. A simple, narrow cornice and corner boards frame the building. It was last used as a school in 1922, and its preservation has been supervised by the Washington Historical Commission.

Washington's most impressive late 19th century public building is St. Andrew's Chapel, located a short distance from the South Center School House on Washington Mountain Road and built in 1899 (MHC #5). Built as the gift of wealthy New Yorker George F. Crane, who summered in Washington, the chapel was designed by architect George C. Harding of Pittsfield, a member of the architectural firm of Harding and Sever. Penciled on the original draft for the building is a note in Harding's own handwriting: "first job I worked on as a draftsman in Pittsfield." A 1/4-scale plan and elevation and a 1/2-scale cross section of the building are preserved today in the files of Bradley Architects of Pittsfield. The church is a Gothic Revival-style building, constructed of coursed fieldstone, and includes a buttress-adorned nave, square, flat-roofed corner tower, and fine tripartite stained-glass windows. It stands on the site of the home of the first minister, Rev. William Gay Ballantine. The St. Andrew's Chapel Committee supervises the Chapel's preservation and operation, and the building is used today for ecumenical services, baptisms, and weddings.

Archaeology

Although no prehistoric sites are currently recorded in the town, it is highly probable that sites do exist. Areas of high sensitivity include well-drained terraces and knolls, especially those in close proximity to freshwater sources, such as Clapp Pond and Muddy Pond, or wetlands, such as those along Coles Brook and the upper reaches of Mountain Brook. Rock shelters are also probable in the more rugged and mountainous areas. Any surviving sites would be significant for understanding the patterns of prehistoric occupation. At present, rugged upland areas such as Washington are among the most poorly documented in the state.

Because of the town's low density of settlement and pattern of modest growth, the likelihood for significant historic archaeological resources is also very high, both within the proposed districts and elsewhere throughout the town. Within the Upper Historic District is a ten-acre tract of common land known as the "Parade Ground." In addition to militia activities, this was the site of the town's first meetinghouse (1773-1791) and its successor (1792-1859). Foundations and features from these buildings as well as the potential for

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related outbuildings would be significant in terms of understanding how this civic core functioned within the community. Also significant for documenting the social, cultural, and economic patterns of the town are the occupation-related features (trashpits, privies, and wells) associated with both standing structures and those no longer extant. Significant archaeological potential also exists in the Washington Station area where a burst of railroad-related activity took place during the mid 19th century. This brief interlude interjected dramatically different elements into the town, both technologically (an engine house and turntable) and culturally (company-built houses for mechanics and engineers). Due to the short duration of this small, railroad-oriented community (1841-ca. 1870) and the lack of subsequent development, the likelihood that discrete archaeological deposits remain is great.

Methodology

The Washington Multiple Resource Area nomination to the National Register of Historic Places is based on the Historic and Architectural Inventory of Washington, Massachusetts, submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1982. Both the inventory and the nomination were prepared by James Parrish, formerly of the Berkshire Country Regional Planning Commission in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The inventory concentrated on pre-1850 buildings, and thus most of those built after this time are not well documented. Further study may reveal other buildings constructed in the late industrial and early modern periods that would be appropriate for inclusion in the Multiple Resource Area.

The inventory surveyed a total of 23 properties, and included residential, institutional, and religious structures, as well as archaeological remains of several additional buildings and sites. Historical research for both the inventory and the National Register nomination relied on vital records, local maps, and, particularly, an account of two hundred years of Washington history written in 1977 by local historian Louise Elliot.

The Multiple Resource Area includes two districts and five additional properties, for a total of 13 properties. The districts, Upper Historic District and Lower Historic District, represent the two nodes of settlement on the slopes of Washington Mountain that evolved in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Upper Historic District was the institutional center of Washington, while the Lower Historic District was primarily residential. Both were supplanted in importance in the mid 19th century with the emergence of a third node of settlement in the valley to the east, and have remained virtually unchanged since that time. The latter area has not been completely surveyed, and thus its integrity cannot yet be judged; in future, a National Register nomination for this area as a third district may be a possibility.

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District boundary lines were determined by the number of intact and contributing properties within each area. The Upper Historic District includes five noncontributing properties of recent construction, while the Lower Historic District includes no intrusions. Within the Lower Historic District, changes have occurred in the original land divisions, and current property lines no longer reflect the early farmsteads with which the remaining residences were associated.

Preservation Activities

The preservation efforts of the town of Washington have been headed by the Washington Historical Commission. Since 1971 Washington Historical Commission has been overseeing the preservation and restoration of the Town Hall, and in 1976 the South Center School House was added to the group's agenda. In 1977, St. Andrew's Chapel was sold by the Episcopal Diocese to the town for one dollar. St. Andrew's Chapel is now used for the seasonal services and weddings supervised by the Chapel Committee. Restoration of the stone foundation of the South Center School House has recently been completed, painting of the exterior of the town hall is about to commence, and future projects include interior work on both buildings.

Considerable efforts have been made by the Washington Historical Commission toward the preservation of the large collection of local historical and archival material which is stored in the Old Town Hall. They have purchased acid-free archival boxes and folders for storage and are beginning to develop a catalog system.

It is felt that nomination of the properties contained within the Multiple Resource Area will assist the Washington Historical Commission in further preservation efforts.

8. Significance Washington Multiple Resource Area--Overview, Wasshington, Mass.

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

Specific dates 1757-1899 **Builder/Architect** see individual forms

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Washington Multiple Resource Area retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association. The town has changed little since the mid 19th century, and it is particularly significant in that its resources document an early stage of community development, one characterized by a pattern of dispersed settlement without a nucleated center such as typified many of the rural towns in Massachusetts. In other communities, this stage has usually been overshadowed, if not obliterated, by subsequent development. Washington is unusual, therefore, in its failure to grow and develop beyond the mid 19th century, and in the evidences of early settlement patterns that it thus retains. A sparsely settled town that briefly enjoyed some small degree of prosperity in the early and mid 19th century, Washington has always been isolated by its location along the ridge of Washington Mountain, 2,050 feet at its summit. The town's resources include a number of Federal-period residences, as well as houses and nonresidential buildings erected during Washington's brief period of prosperity. Several structures retain associations with families connected with Washington's early development. The Washington Multiple Resource Area thus fulfils Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The tiny town of Washington was first chartered by European settlers in 1757. Its earliest development was as a small cluster on the plateau near the summit of Washington Mountain, along an early Springfield-Albany stage route. Washington was originally called Watsontown, after founder Robert Watson of Sheffield, a wily character who with his lawyer David Ingersoll apparently convinced some men in Hartford that they had purchased a specific piece of land from the Stockbridge Indians . A group of proprietors took over the land in 1757 and then found that Mr. Watson had no claim to the parcel; he was subsequently jailed and forced to declare bankruptcy. The proprietors hurriedly changed the name of the property to Greenock (to eliminate any reminder of Watson and in recognition of the vast acres of green encountered by the proprietors), paid the Indians, and obtained a deed from them. The first proprietors' meeting was held in June 1760 at David Bull's Inn in Hartford. The proprietors' 25-acre lots were drawn February 18th, 1768, by a committee of three men. Ten men were among the original proprietors, and the number of proprietors had swelled to only fifteen by ca. 1778. The settling lots were set October 27, 1773, and the town was incorporated as Washington on April 12, 1777.

A petition was filed with the Massachusetts General Court in January 1762 and it was granted a month later with the conditions that: "their be reserved for the first settled minister one sixty-third part of said townships for the use

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of the ministry, and the like quantity for the use and support of a school, that within five years from this time that their be sixty settlers residing in said townships, who shall have a dwelling house of the following dimensions, viz 24 feet long, 18 feet wide and seven foot stud and have one acre land well cleared and fenced and brought to English grass or ploughed. Also to settle a protestant minister of the gospel in said Township within the aforesaid time." While a school was not built until ca. 1783, a meetinghouse was an early achievement. The first burial in the adjacent cemetery occurred in 1776. (Of these first evidences of European settlement, only the cemetery remains today.)

At the first division of Washington's heavily forested lands, in 1763, each of the first ten settlers received 25 acres. At the same time, a committee was established to find a suitable site for a sawmill (probably located downstream from Muddy Pond in the northeastern corner of Washington; its exact location is unknown) to provide timbers for the new houses. A second division of land in 1783 gave each of the original proprietors an additional 25 acres.

A site for a meetinghouse was set June 15, 1768, after a year of considerable debate, at "the Northeast end of Lot #22 on the plan belonging to Isaac Sheldon, in what is now the super District." The first meetinghouse was to be thirty six feet by thirty feet. Even by November 27, 1770, the house does not appear to have been finished for it was voted "that Daniel Foot be paid for building the meeting house as fast as any shall become due to him." The appearance of this original meetinghouse is unknown, for it was struck by lightning in 1791 and rebuilt one year later (see below).

After further dissension and the unconsummated appointment of a Springfield minister, Aaron Bliss, a call was extended to the Rev. William Gay Ballantine in April 1774. Reverend Ballantine, twenty-three years old and recently graduated from Harvard, was asked to "settle" as minister, and "four dollars on each right for settlement" was levied: "one-fourth to be paid in money and three-fourths to be paid in work and materials toward building a house." His salary was to be "45 pounds a year for the first five years and then rise three pounds a year until it rise to 60 pounds, to continue at that during his ministry to the township of Hartwood" (yet another name for Washington). The inhabitants were also to furnish him with 40 cords of wood yearly. Reverend Ballantine served until 1820.

A fourth component of the village center was added in 1783 when the town voted to build a pound near the meetinghouse 30 feet square. Elijah Crane, whose house remains nearby (MHC #3), was chosen as poundkeeper. The standing ruins of the pound's stone walls still remain. In that same March meeting, the proprietors voted to "raise a sum of forty pounds to maintain a grammar school

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in this town." A committee of five persons voted to raise a sum of eighty pounds to construct a schoolhouse in each of four designated school districts. None of these early schools are extant, and their exact locations are unknown.

Ten acres of land around the meetinghouse was set aside as a parade ground and common land at the time of its construction. Two companies of Washington minutemen met and drilled there prior to 1776. During the Revolutionary War, Washington provided the commonwealth with both men and supplies. In all, seventy-three Washington men participated in the war, including Moses Ashley Jr., a native of Westfield, Massachusetts, who came to Washington with his family in 1772, at age 24, and left the town in 1775 for what would be a distinguished military career. Ashley served as first lieutenant at the Battle of Bunker Hill, captain during the Saratoga Campaign, the winter at Valley Forge, and then at the Battles of Monmouth and Rhode Island, and then served as a major with the main army stationed along the Hudson River. After being honorably discharged in 1783, Ashley settled in Stockbridge, where he became a major landholder as well as a brigadier general in the state militia (he also owned many acres in Washington, which he gradually sold off). The Ashley family's home in Washington is not extant.

From its core of meetinghouse, cemetery, and town common (the area is nominated to the National Register as the Upper Historic District), Washington grew linearly along the Old Country Road, now Washington Mountain or Pittsfield Road. Among the first ten proprietors were William Milliken and Elijah Crane, whose homes remain on Washington Mountain Road (MHC #s 10 and 3). Milliken's farm was located on the eastern slope of Washington Mountain south of the meetinghouse node, near the Becket line. It was built ca. 1765 and, as Milliken's Corner, formed the core of what came to be known as the Lower District, a secondary node of settlement further down the slope of the mountain than the original town center (nominated to the National Register as the Lower Historic District). Elijah Crane, who in 1783 became the first keeper of the town pound, built a house just south of the meetinghouse ca. 1785. Much enlarged ca. 1840, the house remains as one of the earliest structures in the Upper Historic District.

In 1792, the meetinghouse was severely damaged by lightning. A year later, the proprietors voted to build a new meetinghouse, with dimensions of 50 feet by 44 feet. While the damaged meetinghouse continued to be used, a committee of three outsiders, Nathaniel Kingsby of Becket, Ely Root of Pittsfield, and Ebenezer Pierce of Partridgefield, was chosen to select a site for the new meetinghouse. The same location was chosen. Work proceeded slowly, and town records show much discussion asking why the building was not finished according to contract. A deed for the land was not approved for the meetinghouse, and yard adjacent, until 1804. By 1806, the new meetinghouse was complete.

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The population of Washington grew slowly during the 18th century. In 1775, the town had only 750 residents, and about 975 by 1800. In the last decades of the 18th century, the town was impoverished, primarily agricultural in its economy, with much of the land that had been cleared used for grazing. Corn, oats, and potatoes were also grown. In 1789, Hartford minister Nathan Perkins visited the town and described it as "a poor town and a disgrace to the exalted name which it bears--cold land--bad for grain--good for grass."

In 1795, a map of Washington showed a developing but still primitive system of unimproved roads and indicated the presence of a gristmill to the west, near October Mountain, and a sawmill at Muddy Pond, in the eastern section of town. Washington retains the houses of several late 18th century residents, including Elkanah Richmond (ca. 1788-1803, MHC #7), Hiram Savory (ca. 1783-1802, MHC #9), Dillingham Clark (1799, MHC #8), and Zenas Clark (ca. 1782-1797, M,HC #20). Savory, Dillingham Clark, and Richmond built near the Milliken Farm on the lower slopes of Washington Mountain. Zenas Clark's house, built on the Becket-Middlefield Road on land that had belonged to Moses Ashley, was far removed from the village center and was actually closer to Becket. All these residents were farmers whose land--in the case of Savory, as large as 100 acres--supported modest homes and barely adequate farms.

By 1818 a "good" route could be followed through Chester to North Becket and hence over Washington Mountain to Pittsfield. It was the beginnings of the Pontoosic Turnpike, a toll road that opened in 1809 but was not improved until 1826. Jasper Morgan built a farmhouse/tavern on the Washington Mountain plateau, close by the town common, ca. 1810-1811 (MHC #1). For about a dozen years, his tavern served as a resting place and spot to change horses for travelers making the difficult trek from Springfield to Pittsfield across the top of Washington Mountain. In 1822, the Morgan family moved to Connecticut and the tavern's operations ceased. In the first decades of the 19th century, the Upper District held only the tavern, meetinghouse, town pound, and common, establishing its status as Washington's institutional center, while the Lower District was exclusively residential.

Despite the presence of the turnpike, growth in the mountaintop village center was slow. As early as 1810, Washington residents were leaving the town for the more fertile land and the less rigorous climate that they had heard could be found in the Western Reserve--Ohio. Together with a number of Becket residents, many Washington farmers entered into agreements to obtain land in the Western Reserve, and abandoned or sold their Washington farms. The town's population had grown slightly from 750 in 1776 to 942 in 1810, but then diminished steadily as a considerable number of the principal farmers exchanged their improved Washington farms for new land in Ohio.

Continued

On February 15, 1826, a charter was granted for the Pontoosic Turnpike Corporation to improve the road from Chester to Pittsfield along Washington Mountain. This turnpike continued in use as a toll road until 1842. The price for construction was $56.00 per rod. Today it is known as Washington Mountain or Pittsfield Road and is the roadway down the spine of the mountain that has always linked the Upper and Lower Historic Districts.

In the valley to the east of Washington Mountain, a new node of settlement began to grow in the early 19th century. Fed by a brook, the valley was a location more appropriate for the establishment of small industries, and indeed had already been the site of an early sawmill, as mentioned above. By ca. 1820, this second village contained a brickyard, potash factory, blacksmith shop, cording and wooden cloth mill, sawmill, general store, tavern, and, after 1810, a Methodist Church. In approximately 1815, the Venetian Slat Curtain Factory opened in the valley. None of these structures survive today.

The construction of a second improved road, known as the County Road, was begun through the valley on the eastern side of the mountain in 1830. It was a massive road-building project. Its construction ensured the increasing isolation and decline of the mountaintop village, for it provided a far easier route through Washington. Even today, the route directly over the spine of Washington Mountain remains a physically difficult one. Although nominally the town's center (the Town Hall would be built here in 1848), the mountaintop village was no longer favored by the few remaining Washington residents, who chose instead to live scattered across the lower slopes.

In 1838, construction of the Western Railroad, to run from Boston to Albany, began through Berkshire County. Washington represented the highest point of the line, and the building process through the town--again, east of both the upper and lower villages--was long and difficult. With an elevation of 1,450 feet as its highest point, the rail line sloped sharply to both north and south at a rate of 80 feet per mile. The route required the removal of vast quantities of rock along the way, creating a half-mile cut 55 feet deep. The Phillip Eames House (MHC #14), on aptly named Stone House Road in the eastern section of Washington, was built in 1843 of quarried irregular coursed granite said to have been block-cut from Summit Rock, the point through which the line was blasted between 1838 and 1840. The summit cut required the removal of over 100,000 cubic yards of rock, all of which was cut by pick, shovel, nine-pound hammer, and black blasting powder. Daniel Carmichael and Co. had the contract for the rock cutting and the crew was composed mostly of Irish stonecutters who eventually helped construct the Phillip Eames house in 1843. The rail line was completed by 1841. With the development of the Western railway, the center of commerce shifted east from the mountain to the summit cut, which became known as Washington Depot, or Washington Station.

Continued

The construction process and subsequent early years of the railroad's operation brought a shortlived increase in Washington's population, which reached its peak of 1,068 by 1855. Washington played a central role in the rail line at first: almost every train had to be helped up the mountain's steep grade, and the engines were often switched for the rest of the journey. There was a huge turntable at the summit to make sure that outgoing and incoming trains never had to leave the station backwards. The rail company built a small railroad village near the Washington station, located along Upper Valley Road in the eastern part of Washington, with housing for railroad workers and their families. At its peak, the newborn village included eight houses, a village store and post office, a depot, and an engineers' house. An 1858 map of Berkshire County shows that Washington also had eleven sawmills located along the town's brooks. In approximately 1870, however, the rail company gave its employees the option of living in the larger town of Chester. The removal of the crews and their families brought a swift decline to the town; the engine house, depot, and turntable were torn down immediately, and by 1880, the workers' housing had been abandoned. Most has since been torn down. One house survives; located on Valley Road, it was built ca. 1843-1845. It has been sheathed in asphalt and altered with the addition of a porch, and no longer retains integrity. By 1875, the town's population had fallen sharply to about 450, and it continued to drop into the 20th century.

By 1865, agriculture had been joined by the lumber industry as the major component of the town's economy. Washington had 102 farms, which covered 22,724 acres of the town. Five sawmills employing ten persons were cutting 758,000 board feet of lumber and 80,000 shingles from local timber. Firewood and bark cutting amounted to 6,630 cords and employed 40 persons. Charcoal for Lenox and other iron furnaces amounted to 77,000 bushels a year, and employed twenty coaliers.

Lacking sufficient members, the Upper District's Congregational Church was abandoned by 1859. Most of its members had joined the new Union Church, which had been erected in the valley at Washington Station ca. 1846. (Although the church is no longer standing, having been demolished in 1930, the parsonage remains on Washington State Road, now Route 8. It has been covered with synthetic siding and has sustained some alterations.)

In the 1870s, considerable debate in town meeting let to a decision to finance the building of new district schools. The South Center School House (MHC #5), located midway between the upper and lower districts, is an intact one-room schoolhouse that served the town from 1880 to 1922. It was built on the site of one of the town's first schools. The construction of replacement schoolhouses was among the few building projects in the town in the middle decades of the 19th century, as Washington continued to lose population.

Continued

A visitor to Washington, Clark Bryan, wrote in 1892 of the "decay and desolation abounding where once the landscape, both on the mountain top and down the hillside road, was dotted with well-tilled farms . . . ; where denuded hilltops, barren hillsides and unoccupied farms now about, and where gaping cellar-holes stare at the passer-by with a gaze of silent solemnity at once pathetic and depressing."

In 1895, a series of land purchases changed Washington and briefly brought some activity back to the community. State Senator Thomas Post of Lenox began to purchase farmsteads, eventually accumulating 14,000 acres--5 x 7 1/2 miles--which covered all of the western portion of the town on October Mountain. For two years, Washington residents were perplexed as to Post's motives, until in 1897 it was revealed that the area was to become a game preserve and an estate for William C. Whitney (who had served as Secretary of the Navy for President Cleveland). John R. Root of Lenox was contracted to build a large Shingle-Style hunting lodge in the center of the property. It was called, appropriately, The Antlers. The estate was completed just in time to serve as the honeymoon site for Mr. Whitney's son, Harry Payne Whitney, and his bride, Gertrude Vanderbilt, in 1897. Mr. Whitney imported a herd of buffalo, elk, blacktail deer, and moose to stock his preserve, but by 1903 he had lost interest in the property, following his wife's death. Whitney died a year later. The Whitney family closed the preserve in 1906, and it was offered to the Commonwealth as a state park in 1915. The one-time estate was renamed October Mountain State Forest. The former estate's coach barn and house were destroyed in 1926 and 1929, respectively, by fires started by lightning. The wood-framed water tower was retained for use as a firetower until 1946, when it was demolished.

The Whitney Estate was one of several large estates built on Washington Mountain in the late 19th century, when the area briefly enjoyed popularity as a wealthy resort for members of adjacent Lenox's summer society. Bucksteep Manor was built by George Crane of New York in 1899 on land that had previously been part of the farm of Rev. William Gay Ballantine. (The estate has been extensively altered and no longer retains integrity.) The Gothic Revival-style St. Andrew's Chapel on Washington Mountain Road (MHC #4) was commissioned by George Crane as part of the estate. In 1937, the house and chapel were presented to the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts for use as a youth camp and conference center. The center operated between 1937 and 1969; subsequently, the house was sold and is at present used as Bucksteep Manor Resort, while the chapel, now in possession of the town, is used frequently for ecumenical services.

Washington today is a sparsely populated town, with only 500 residents. In recent years, residents have constructed new houses on the sites of some of the abandoned farmhouses, and other houses have been built scattered

Continued

throughout the town, including a number at the top of Washington Mountain within the original town center. Some of the older properties are being subdivided, and the town has established a two-acre minimum for new buildings. Although Washington supports only one business (a machine shop) and lacks post office, fire and police department, church, and school, the town has grown slightly in the past decade as new residents have arrived to take advantage of the town's rural atmosphere. Most residents work in Pittsfield, eight miles to the northeast. The State Forest is a popular attraction, drawing hikers and campers from across the state.

Archaeological Significance

Archaeological remains provide an important means for documenting the social, cultural, and economic patterns that characterized this low-density upland community. Because of the limited number of surviving buildings, archaeological deposits are of particular consequence.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual forms

Quadrangle name Becket, East Lee, Peru and Pittsfield east **Quadrangle scale** 1:25,000

UTM References

A See individual forms. Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C D

E F

G H

Verbal boundary description and justification The Washington Multiple Resource Area boundary is defined as the political and geographical bounds of the town of Washington, which reflect its historical development. Boundaries for individual properties conform to current lot lines. Boundaries for districts are described on the district forms.

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 Firedberg, Preservation Planner, MHC, with James Parrish, former Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Planner, and Sarah Poland, Chairperson, Washington Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission **date** March 1986

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 X 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 Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission
State Historic Preservation Officer **date** Aug. 6, 1986

For NPS use only

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

See Continuation Sheet for Listings **date**

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

GPO 911-399

9. Major Bibliographical References

Books and Articles

Cook, Frederick W., Secretary of the Commonwealth, compiler, Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts. 1948.

Elliot, Louise, The History of the Town of Washington, Massachusetts, 1777-1977. Washington, Mass., 1977.

Springfield Sunday Republican, "History of Washington, Old Berkshire Town, First to Adopt Name of Father of His Country." September 13, 1914.

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Deeds and Records

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Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds, Colonial Records and Property Plans, pp. 105-128.

Town of Washington, Mass., Record Book No. 1, 1778-1818; Record Book No. 2, 1819-1848.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received 8/18/86
date entered

Continuation sheet | Item number | Page 1

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Washington Multiple Resource Area
State Berkshire County, MASSACHUSETTS

Comm Byett Except 9/12/86

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
1. Clark--Eames House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/12/86
	Attest	
2. Eames, Philip, House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/12/86
	Attest	
3. Lower Historic District	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/12/86
	Attest	
4. Saint Andrew's Chapel	Substantive Review for Keeper	accept Patrick Andrus 9/12/86
	Attest	Beth L. Savage 9/12/86
5. Sibley--Cocoran House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/12/86
	Attest	
6. South Center School House	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/12/86
	Attest	
7. Upper Historic District	Substantive Review for Keeper	Patrick Andrus 9/2/87
	Attest	Beth L. Savage 9/2/87
8. Deming-Root-Messenger-Schultz House	Substantive Review for Keeper	Eligible Patrick Andrus 9/12/86
	DOE/OWNER OBJECTION Attest	Beth L. Savage 9/12/86
9.	Keeper	
	Attest	
10.	Keeper	
	Attest	