

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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  
Brook Farm

AND/OR COMMON  
Brook Farm

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
670 Baker Street

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN  
Boston (West Roxbury)

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

9th

STATE  
Massachusetts

CODE  
025

COUNTY  
Suffolk

CODE  
025

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER cemetery

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Lutheran Service Association of New England

STREET & NUMBER  
74 Crestwood Road

CITY, TOWN  
West Hartford

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE  
Connecticut

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC  
Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER  
Suffolk County Court House, Somerset Street

CITY, TOWN  
Boston

STATE  
Massachusetts

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
None

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Brook Farm is located on the southern side of Baker Street, just west of its intersection with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Parkway, in the West Roxbury section of Boston, Massachusetts. The brook from which the farm derived its name, now known as Sawmill Brook, runs through the property in a generally northeast-southwest direction. The Brook Farm site is bordered on the northwest, northeast, and southeast by cemeteries, with substantial areas of residential development beyond.

Although the Brook Farm land appears to remain largely in a natural state, its historic character has been altered. Of the original 200 acres at the site (180 acres south of Baker Street, 20 north), only some 20, located primarily in the meadows southwest of the farmhouse, were actually used for agricultural purposes by the Brook Farm community. The remaining sections of those fields now give the appearance of rough pasture land (see photograph 5). Portions of the Piney Woods, where the Farmers walked and picnicked, were cut for fuel while the site was used as a military encampment during the Civil War. More clearing and some changes in topography resulted from the development of Gethsemane Cemetery, laid out on the farm in 1873.

Of the extant buildings at the site, only one, a small wooden residence built c. 1842, is definitely known to have been used by the Brook Farm community. Constructed in the shape of a Maltese cross, the building is known as the Margaret Fuller Cottage, although she never lived there. The cottage has been altered on both the interior and exterior and appears to be in poor condition (photograph 3); it now serves as the residence of the Gethsemane caretaker. Local sources also suggest that the two-story wooden structure which now serves as the garage and maintenance building for the cemetery (photograph 4) may have been constructed by Brook Farmers as their print shop. (However, no documentation of that theory was available at the time of this report, and other sources contradict it). Other buildings at Brook Farm include a large wooden residence with several additions, all in deteriorated condition (photograph 2), which stands on the site of the farmhouse used by the community, and a modern one-story building which houses offices for Gethsemane Cemetery.

Until recently the large residence housed the Martin Luther Orphan's Home, operated by the Lutheran Service Association of New England; the building is now vacant. While Gethsemane Cemetery remains in active use, plans for future development of the residence and the remaining areas of the Brook Farm site are uncertain. Sale of all or part of the property by the Lutheran Service Association has been discussed but no action has been taken to date.



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 188 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	320880	4618310	B	19	320320	46183210
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	19	319820	4618360	D	19	320520	46184320
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The dotted line on the accompanying U.S.G.S. map (Newton, Massachusetts Quadrangle, 1970) reflects the approximate extent (some 180 acres) of that portion of Brook Farm located southwest of the present Baker Street in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Exact original lines could not be determined in the limited time available for on-site inspection. Another parcel of some 20 acres, located northeast of Baker Street, has been completely absorbed in the development of St. Joseph's Cemetery.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by S. Sydney Bradford, Historian, 1/20/66

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

April 3, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

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Brook Farm

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The Brook Farm Project was financed by the sale of stock, a purchaser of one share becoming automatically a member of the institute, governed by a board of directors. The profits, if any, after all payments and improvements, were to be divided into a number of shares corresponding with the number of days' labor performed. Among the original shareholders were Charles A. Dana and Nathaniel Hawthorne (whose novel *The Blithedale Romance*, 1852, is a fictionalized portrait of the Brook Farm community). Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, and Orestes A. Brownson were interested visitors.

Brook Farm attracted not only intellectuals--though teachers always were present in greater number than farmers--but carpenters, shoemakers, and printers. The community paid a dollar a day for work, physical or mental, to men and to women, and provided to all members, their children and family dependents, housing, fuel, clothing and food at approximately actual cost. For four years the Farmers published the Harbinger, a weekly magazine devoted to social and political problems, to which James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Horace Greeley occasionally contributed.

Brook Farm was noted particularly for its excellent school, which in educational theory was modern, desiring "perfect freedom of intercourse between students and teaching body." Disciplinary measures consisted in the attempt to arouse a sense of personal responsibility and to communicate a passion for intellectual work. There were no prescribed study hours, and each student was required to give a few hours a day to manual labour--the girls to kitchen and laundry work, the boys to hoeing and chopping. There was an infant school, a primary school and college preparatory course covering six years. George William Curtis, Father Isaac Thomas Hecker and Gen. Francis C. Barlow were early students there.

Although communal living proved to have disadvantages (Hawthorne found that he was unable to write there and left after six months), for a while it looked as though the ideal of the founders would have something of a practical realization. Within three years the community--or "Phalanx" as it was called after 1844 when Brook Farm adopted some of the theories of the French socialist Charles Fourier (q.v.)--had added four houses, workrooms and dormitories to its original farmhouse and school. It then put all available funds into the construction of a large central building to be known as the Phalanstery, which burned to the ground as its completion was being celebrated on the night of March 2, 1846. That

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disaster combined with further financial troubles, including Hawthorne's suit against Ripley and Dana to recover his investment in the project, to bring the end of the Brook Farm community the following year. Ripley moved to New York and in 1849 became literary critic for Horace Greeley's Tribune, a position he held until his death in 1880.

The Brook Farm site was sold at public auction in 1849 to the town of Roxbury (now West Roxbury) and for the next several years served as the local poor farm. In 1855 the property was acquired by James Freeman Clarke, a member of the Transcendental Club and a contributor to the Harbinger, who intended to preserve it as an historic shrine. During the Civil War, Clarke allowed the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to use the farm as the encampment for the Second Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry (Camp Andrew). In 1868 Laurence C. and James W. Munroe bought the land and buildings, which they used for a time as a summer boarding house.

Gottlieb F. Burkhardt purchased Brook Farm in 1870 and the following year formed the Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church for Works of Mercy, which would use the West Roxbury site to provide a temporary home for orphan children and to establish a cemetery. Much of the present character of Brook Farm is the result of that organization's work. The Martin Luther Orphan's Home was opened in 1872 in a building on the site of the original farmhouse. Subscriptions were gathered and Gethsemane Cemetery was laid out in 1873. The Lutheran Service Association of New England, successor to the original Association, operated the orphanage until the early 1970's; the buildings are now vacant. The cemetery remains in active use; visitors are admitted to the grounds during daylight hours.

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