

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
CITY, TOWN
Boston (West Roxbury)
STATE
Massachusetts
VICINITY OF
9th
COUNTY
Suffolk
CODE
025
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
9th
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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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
Connecticut
STATE

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		

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.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1841-47

BUILDER/ARCHITECT N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Brook Farm Institute for Agriculture and Education, which operated from 1841 to 1847 on a 200-acre site at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, was one of many experiments in communal living carried out in the United States during the first half of the 19th century. It is better known than most of those communities--and has a lasting place in American social history--because of the distinguished literary figures and intellectual leaders associated with it. George Ripley, formerly a Unitarian minister and later literary critic for the New York Tribune, headed the enterprise and was largely responsible for the production of its magazine, The Harbinger. Others connected with the project were Charles A. Dana and Nathaniel Hawthorne (both shareholders), Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, William Henry Channing, and John S. Dwight.

While the grounds at Brook Farm appear to remain largely in a natural state, their character has been altered. Much of the property is now occupied by Gethsemane Cemetery, established by the Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church for Works of Mercy, which acquired the site in 1870-71. Until recently the Lutheran Service Association of New England, successor to the original Association, also maintained an orphanage at Brook Farm. Of the extant buildings on the property, only one, a small cottage, is definitely known to have been occupied by the Brook Farm community, and it too has been altered. Visitors are admitted to the site (but not to the buildings) during daylight hours.

Historical Background

The Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, an experiment in communal living, was established at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, on some 200 acres of land formerly operated by Charles Ellis as a dairy farm. The institute was organized and directed by George Ripley, a former Unitarian minister, an editor of the Dial (a critical literary monthly), and a leader of the Transcendental Club, an informal gathering of intellectuals in the Boston/Concord area begun in 1836. He was aided by his wife, Sophia Dana Ripley, a woman of wide culture and academic experience. Their goal in creating the Brook Farm community was to combine the thinker and the worker, to guarantee the highest mental freedom and to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent and cultivated persons whose relations with each other would permit a more wholesome and simple life than could be led amid the pressure of competitive institutions.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 188 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	320880	4683810	B	19	320320	4683210
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	19	319820	4683610	D	19	320520	4684320
	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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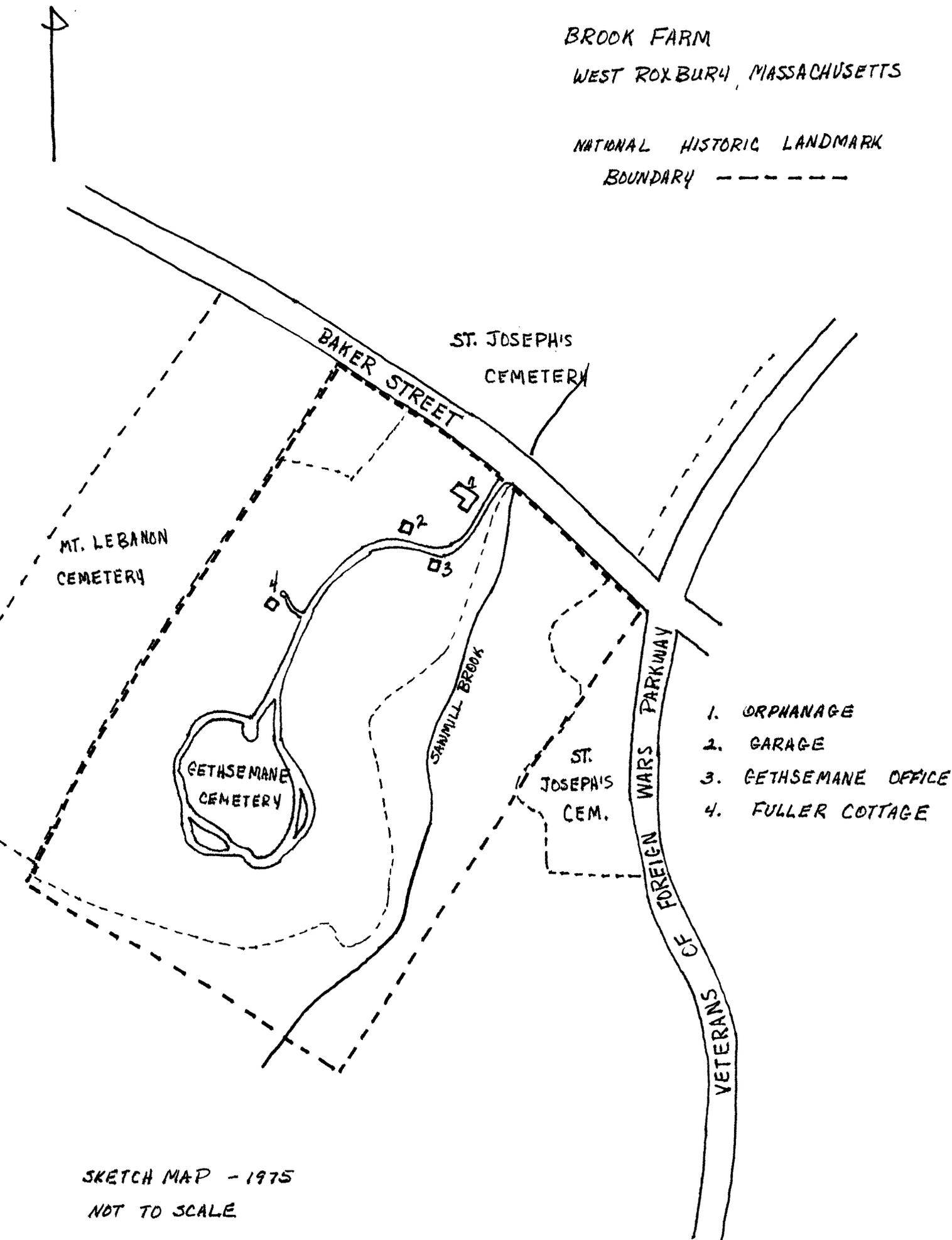
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BROOK FARM

WEST ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
BOUNDARY - - - - -



- 1. ORPHANAGE
- 2. GARAGE
- 3. GETHSEMANE OFFICE
- 4. FULLER COTTAGE

SKETCH MAP - 1975
NOT TO SCALE