

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**COPY**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC The Stone Building

AND/OR COMMON

The East Lexington Branch Library (Cary Memorial Library)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 735 Massachusetts Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th 4

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input 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 type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Town of Lexington

STREET & NUMBER Lexington Town Hall

CITY, TOWN Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. South Middlesex Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER 208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts 02138

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth  
Historic American Buildings Survey (MASS-605)

DATE 1967 (Mass.); 1941 (HABS)

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Washington, DC

CITY, TOWN Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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

The Stone Building (Cary Memorial Library) faces onto Massachusetts Avenue (formerly Main Street), one of the principal roads in East Lexington. It is set back from the road approximately thirty feet and is surrounded by a circular driveway.

The Stone Building was designed in 1833 by architect Isaac Melvin of Concord and is said to be his first work. The contractor was John Colby and the carpenter was Curtis Capell. The building is an impressive example of the Greek Revival style.

The two-story structure is five bays wide and five bays deep. Its tetrastyle portico is supported by massive fluted Doric columns, and its front pediment contains two quarter-circle windows with finely wrought radiating sash. A series of guttae at the eaves adds further ornament to the pediment. The main focus of the front facade, and the highlight of the entire building, is the central entrance. The doorway is surmounted by a fanlight and flanked by sidelights. The entrance is further enhanced by Greek fretwork and other detail derived from anthemion and palmette motifs. The second-floor window above the doorway echoes the sidelights and Greek detail below. Heavy pilasters add emphasis at either corner of the front facade.

The Stone Building is sheathed with white clapboards, and the dark green shuttered windows have six over six lights. Three brick chimneys rise from the ridge roof. The exterior of the building is basically unaltered from its original appearance. Inside the downstairs floor has been adapted for library purposes, although the upstairs meeting room remains much the same as when it was used for religious and political gatherings.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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

1833

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Isaac Melvin

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stone Building is significant as one of the early centers of free-thinking and discussion for religious, philosophical and cultural groups in the East Village of Lexington. The building is also the most elaborate Greek Revival structure in East Lexington today.

In 1832 Eli Robbins, a wealthy merchant and public spirited citizen of Lexington, saw the need for a public building in the town where lectures, preaching, and other meetings could be held and particularly where freedom of speech, including the current anti-slavery point of view, might be allowed. In the spring of 1833 Robbins engaged Mr. Isaac Melvin of Concord to design a suitable building located in the "East Village" of Lexington about two miles along the main road from the Battle Green.

In the same year citizens of the East Village petitioned the Town Meeting to provide a church and a minister in their own part of town. When no help was given, they formed the "Religious Society of the East Village" and in 1835 they began meeting in the building which Eli Robbins had commissioned.

The pastor of the new religious society was the Reverend Charles Follen who had been forced to flee his native Germany because of his radical political activities. In America he became an ardent abolitionist before such views were acceptable in New England, and as a result he lost his position as professor of German at Harvard College. In order to give full expression to his religious, moral, and political opinions, Follen turned to the ministry.

After six months of preaching to the Religious Society of the East Village, Follen was called to Watertown, and he sent as his replacement Ralph Waldo Emerson who preached in the hall about two years. Emerson was succeeded by other noted men such as the Reverend John Pierpont, the Reverend Theodore Parker, and the Reverend Samuel J. May. The building was also used as a gathering place for a number of other groups. Amos Bronson Alcott held conversation meetings there, and Henry Thoreau was said to have considered it as a home for his private school.

In 1851 the building was sold to Abner Stone who lived there with his family until his death in 1872. After the death of the widow Stone, her daughter, Miss Ellen A. Stone, offered the town the large house for use as a library. As an expression of its gratitude, the town voted to call the building the "Stone Building". It has been used ever since as a library and is today the East Lexington Branch Library (Cary Memorial Library).

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Piper, Dr. Fred Smith, "Architectural Yesterdays in Lexington," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. IV, Lexington, Mass. 1912.  
 Smith, A. Bradford, "History of the Stone Building," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. II, Lexington, Mass. 1900.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .37

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	318420	4699600	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Judy Dobbs, National Register Editor

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

November 24, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

# 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Elizabeth Reed Amador*

TITLE

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

*Nov. 25, 1975*

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Lexington

\_\_\_\_VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT Elizabeth Heath

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT 6 Mellon Road  
Wellesley, MA 02181

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO 1

View facing east, front corner view.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

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**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Lexington

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COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE USGS, Lexington Quadrangle

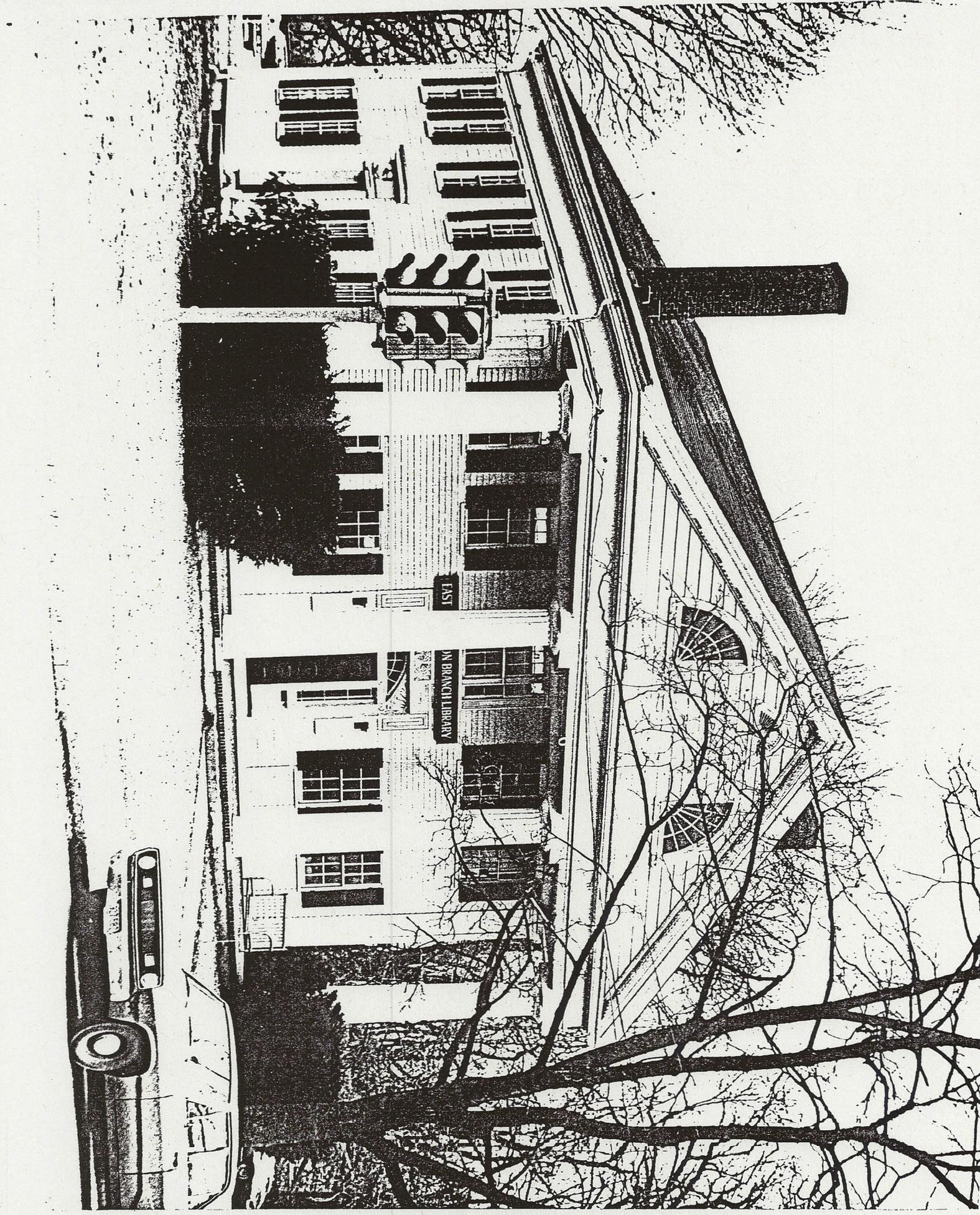
SCALE 1:24000

DATE 1971

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

- 1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
- 2. NORTH ARROW
- 3. UTM REFERENCES



Lexington:  
Stone Building

UTM Reference:  
19/318420/4699600

