

FORM B - BUILDING

AREA	FORM NO.
	592

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108



City Lexington

Address 12 Bicentennial Way

Historic Name Cary Estate Caretaker's

Use _____

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION:

Date c. 1830-1850

Source stylistic analysis

Style Vernacular Italianate

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) rear ell (west), rear ell (north; truncated 1978), porch enclosed (north) (all before 1918)

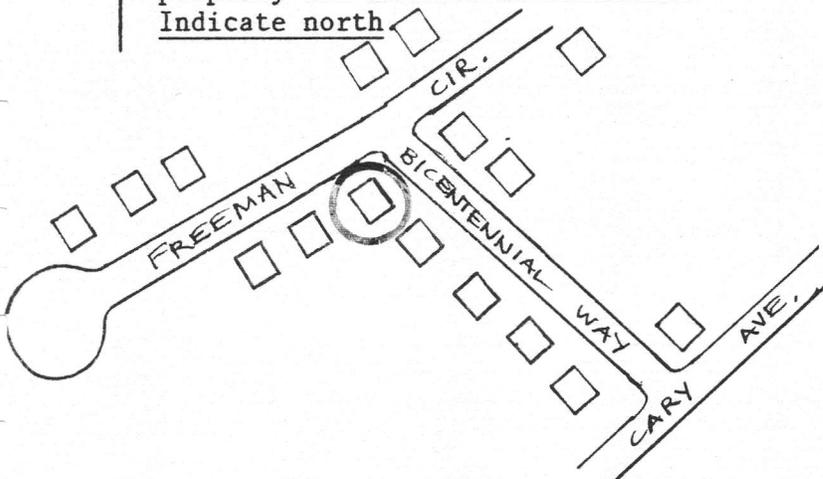
Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 15500 ft.²

Setting On cul-de-sac adjacent to large, recent developer-built houses.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date April, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

This Vernacular farmhouse, three bays wide and two deep with a center entrance on the side and unusual false dormers, retains so few interior finishes that it is difficult to date. Nevertheless, the brick foundation and the stairway details -- a curved curtail step, narrow round newel post topped by a handrail spiraled at its end, and plain round balusters -- all suggest a ~~second~~ ^{mid} quarter of the nineteenth century construction date.

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

This house served as the caretaker's house for the Cary estate, a 200-acre estate comprising most of the land bounded by Spring, Shade, and Middle streets and Marrett Road. Part of this land was first acquired by the Carys in 1853 when William Harris Cary (1798-1861), whose father Jonathan owned a nearby farm, purchased the former Hastings farms from Lovett Stimson. The farmhouse near Shade Street, which had been built in 1843 apparently replacing an earlier one shown on the 1830 map, was remodeled by the Carys into an elaborate summer house.

William H. Cary was married to Maria Hastings (1801-1881), daughter of the old Lexington family who had originally owned the farm. The Carys had no children but in 1844 adopted Alice Butler, niece of a business partner. William H. Cary and his brother Isaac were wealthy dry goods importers who lived in Boston and New York but spent summers and long visits in Lexington. After the death of William H., his widow offered the estate to the state for an agricultural school, but it was refused. The family was a great benefactor of the town, however, donating, among other gifts, money for a library, town hall, library building, memorial hall, and lecture series.

The Cary house was completely destroyed in a famous fire on January 25, 1895. Alice B. Cary, the owner at that time, immediately rebuilt a large mansion on the site. After her death it was used by the Mohawk Club and eventually, in 1957, razed by a developer in order to divide the rest of the estate into house lots. The house at 12 Bicentennial Way, with a presumed construction date of

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Land in Lexington, March 1925, Certificate 18905, Book 126, p. 405, Middlesex Land Court, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Lexington Historical Society. Lexington: A Handbook of its Points of Interest. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Historical Society, 1891.

Plan of Land in Lexington, August 1918, Certificate 9308, Book 57, p. 489, Middlesex Land Court, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Scenes from Old Lexington." Lexington Minute Man, September 1953.

Worthen, Edwin B. A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946, pp. 82-84. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.

1830 map

1853 map

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: 592
Property Name: 12 Bicentennial Way	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Since that time but before 1918 (see plan on file with the Lexington Historical Commission), the house has had many additions, all on fieldstone foundations: two rear ells, the first of which has very high ceilings on the first floor and very low ones on the second; a long, narrow ell to the north (shown in photo), which was truncated in 1978; and an enclosed porch on the north. The kitchen floor was apparently replaced in 1928, perhaps because of a fire, for newspapers with that date can be seen underneath the floorboards.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

c. 1830-1850, must have been another house on the property predating the Cary ownership. It certainly stands next to a road coming in from Middle Street that is still clearly discernible and marked by granite gateposts between 58 and 62 Middle Street (see plan on file with the Lexington Historical Commission). After the demise of the Cary estate but before the development of the Bicentennial Way area in 1976, the house was at 83 Cary Avenue and was reached by a gravel road coming in from that street. At that time a large, two-story 15-stall barn with stalls on both floors, one of three originally on the estate, stood on the lot now occupied by the house at 10 Bicentennial Way; the barn was taken down by the developer in 1978.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom