

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

0063000074

Boston N.

730

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 53 Hancock St.

Historic Name Joseph F. Simonds/Batcheller/Stone House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1849

Source Tuttle list; Lexington Valuation lists

Style/Form Italianate w. Colonial Revival/Jacobethan additions

Architect/Builder David A. Tuttle

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite (original house), Fieldstone (additions)

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard, Stucco

Roof Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Garage



Major Alterations (with dates)

Two additions at east end, front addition/porte cochere (by 1875?); enclosed porch, Colonial Revival and Jacobethan finishes (dates unknown)

Condition Good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 0.87 A.

Setting Set back from and on a rise above a heavily-trafficked residential street (the driveway is off a side street) in a neighborhood of large, high-style 19th- and early 20th-century houses

Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) January 1998

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Although 53 Hancock St. appears to be a Colonial Revival house with Jacobethan details, it is actually an Italianate that has had many alterations and is thus unlike any other house in Lexington. The original house was apparently a three-by-two bay, center entrance, side-gabled Italianate with wide corner boards and a frieze board across the front and rear and possibly also the gable ends. It was set on a granite foundation, which can be seen to the right of the main entrance, and clad with clapboards; the present roof is of slate. Two additions, both on fieldstone foundations, were then added to the east end of the house. The first, which is set back on the front and offset on the rear elevation, is, like the original house, 2½ stories and side-gabled. The second addition is two stories high with a gable on hip roof. A third addition extends out from the front of the house; it is also two stories with the first story left open to form a porte cochere supported by the corner posts and Tuscan columns. Many Colonial Revival and Jacobethan details have been added to the original house and first addition: three front-gabled dormers on both the front and rear elevations, modillions at the cornice of the house and dormers, curved brackets at the eaves on the gable ends, stucco and half-timbering in the gable ends and on the dormers, a dentil course at the top of the frieze board on the front gable end, an enclosed wraparound porch with a circular bay at the rear and paneling under the windows, diamond-paned windows, etc. The exterior center chimney on the original house is undoubtedly also a later addition; this house also has a ridge chimney and there is an end chimney in the first addition.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

David A. Tuttle, a prominent 19th-century builder in Lexington, wrote in 1904 that he built the original part of this house in 1849 for Joseph F. Simonds. This construction date is confirmed by Lexington assessors' records, which show that in 1850 Simonds was assessed for a new house. Assessors' records also indicate that Simonds had acquired the land on which this house is located from Nathan and William Chandler in 1849, although the deed was not actually signed until 1851. The deed says, however, that there was already a house on the land, so perhaps the 1849 acquisition had been an informal agreement. The deed also specified that no house was ever to be built between this one and Hancock St. and there was a similar restriction in the deed for the house originally at 55 Hancock St. (MHC #732), now moved to 56 Hancock St. (MHC #733). This house appears to have been originally a three-by-two bay side gabled Italianate (see Architectural Description above), which would have been similar in massing to the house that Tuttle built in 1855 at 22 Hancock St. (MHC #106). Simonds, who had sold his family farm on Burlington St. (9 Burlington St., MHC #742) just before moving here, did not live in this house very long, however, for in 1854 he sold it to a Henry Harris and moved to the old Fiske house further up Hancock St. (63 Hancock St., MHC #735). Harris, described in deeds as a "gentleman," probably put on the two side additions, for both are shown on a plan drawn in 1865 while Harris still owned the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

- Beers, F. W. *County Atlas of Middlesex Massachusetts*. New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1875. Lexington Center plate.
- Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 25.
- Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds. Plans. Cambridge, MA. 609: 402; 668: 560; 1042: 103; 3547: 73; 3968: 326; Pl. Bk. 15, Pl. 33.
- Tuttle, David Ainsworth. List of buildings erected in Lexington. Presented to the Lexington Historical Society, April 4, 1904. On file at Lexington Historical Society, Lexington, MA.
- Worthen, Edwin B. Letter to Mrs. Bruce Currie, 16 February 1951. Worthen Collection. Cary Library, Lexington, MA.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town
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Property Address
53 Hancock St.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

In 1868 Harris sold the house to Brooks T. Batcheller (1813–1902), a self-made man who had begun as a towboy on the Middlesex Canal, became a stage driver when the canal was discontinued, then a stable keeper in Boston, and moved to Lexington in 1868 where he became a prominent citizen—he was on the first board of trustees of the Lexington Savings Bank when it was established in 1871 and elected to the state senate in 1874. The Batchellers may have added the front ell, for it is shown on an 1875 map. In 1898 the Batchellers sold the house and moved in with their son Warren, who lived at 46 Hancock St. (MHC #725).

The house was owned from 1901 to 1910 by James T. Davis, the owner specified on Tuttle's 1904 list, and between 1910 and 1915 by Edward C. Graves, who made some alterations. The most extensive alterations, however, were made after the house was acquired in 1915 by Edward C. Stone, the U.S. manager of Employees Liability Assurance Co.



Roll # 8, Negative #23