

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no. E	Form no. 230
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City Lexington

Address 870 Mass, Ave.

Ammi Hall House

Present use \_\_\_\_\_

Present owner Mildred E. Eliz. Murray

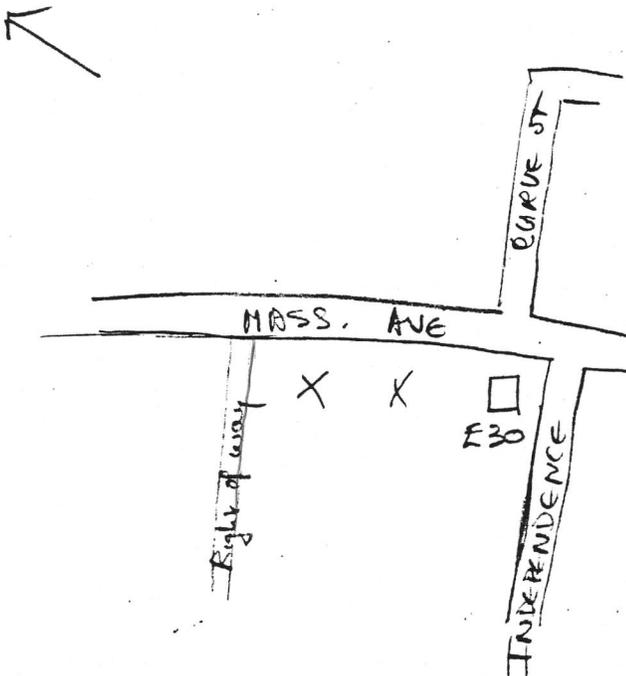
Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 1833

Source Deed Research

Style Federal / Greek Revival

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) garage (late stucco)

Other features 5 over 4 fenestration. 2

chimneys rear, Greek Revival door, granite

foundation, attached ell on left

Altered \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:

Less than one acre x Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate frontage + 50

Approximate distance of building from street

10' - 15'

6. Recorded by E. W. Reinhardt

Organization Lex. Hist. Com.

Date 7/75

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Amiri Hall

Original use \_\_\_\_\_

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates \_\_\_\_\_

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

- |                       |       |                            |       |                         |       |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Aboriginal            | _____ | Conservation               | _____ | Recreation              | _____ |
| Agricultural          | _____ | Education                  | _____ | Religion                | _____ |
| Architectural         | _____ | Exploration/<br>settlement | _____ | Science/<br>invention   | _____ |
| The Arts              | _____ | Industry                   | _____ | Social/<br>Humanitarian | _____ |
| Commerce              | _____ | Military                   | _____ | Transportation          | _____ |
| Communication         | _____ | Political                  | _____ |                         |       |
| Community development | _____ |                            |       |                         |       |

9. Historical Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Door frame. May have been influenced by Melvin doors on Stone building (E-16  
 Brown-Butterfied house (E-12)  
 Door itself has two carved rosettes at door knob level barely visible in picture.



has local histories, deeds, assessor's records,

# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town  
LEXINGTON

Property Address  
870 MASS. AVENUE

Area(s) Form No.

E	230
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## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

This is one of a number of Asher Benjamin-inspired doorways which survive in East Lexington (see also 627, 715, 782, 884, and 1106 Massachusetts Avenue). Unlike most of the others, the influence of Benjamin's pattern books appears to have been indirect, its builder did not base his design on a book plate, but on features of the doorway of the Stone Building at 715 Massachusetts Avenue.

As described by Elizabeth Reinhardt and Anne Grady in 1977:

Although the house itself is a modest five bay wide, one bay deep farmhouse, it has as splendid a doorframe as could be imagined for such a simple structure. Two Doric columns support a portico which, although not pedimented in full, suggests the angle of a pediment in its shape. A full entablature extends from the building's façade to the columns but does not continue across the front. To complete the entablature would have created an entrance too massive to be pleasing and too low for comfort. Pilasters with Benjamin's Greek fret on both the facing and lateral sides of the portico support the entablature and frame the two-thirds length sidelights which flank the door. Over the door is a shallow wooden fan with central sunburst and an ornamental keystone in its defining arch. Columns, fret and fan proclaim the kinship with the Stone Building (*Old Time New England*, 1977, p. 28).

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

This house was reportedly constructed in 1833 for Ammi Hall who was born in 1798 and died in 1867 (Reinhardt & Grady, 1977, p. 28; Hudson, vol. 2, p. 262). He was a blacksmith and married Eliza Crandall in April 1834.

The 1898 map lists the owner as Mrs. E.A. Hansen. Eliza Ann Hall (daughter of Ammi Hall) married Horatio Hanson in 1868 but according to Hudson she died in 1883(?) (Hudson, vol. 2, p. 270).

According to E.B. Worthen, the house was later occupied by Annie Hanscom (*Tracing the Past*, p. 46).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*.

Lexington Directories, various dates.

Reinhardt, Elizabeth and Anne A. Grady. "Asher Benjamin in East Lexington, Massachusetts", *Old-Time New England*, vol. LXVII, nos. 3-4, Winter-Spring 1977, pp. 28-29.

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998.  
1898 Atlas of Lexington.

Supplement prepared by:  
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June 2009