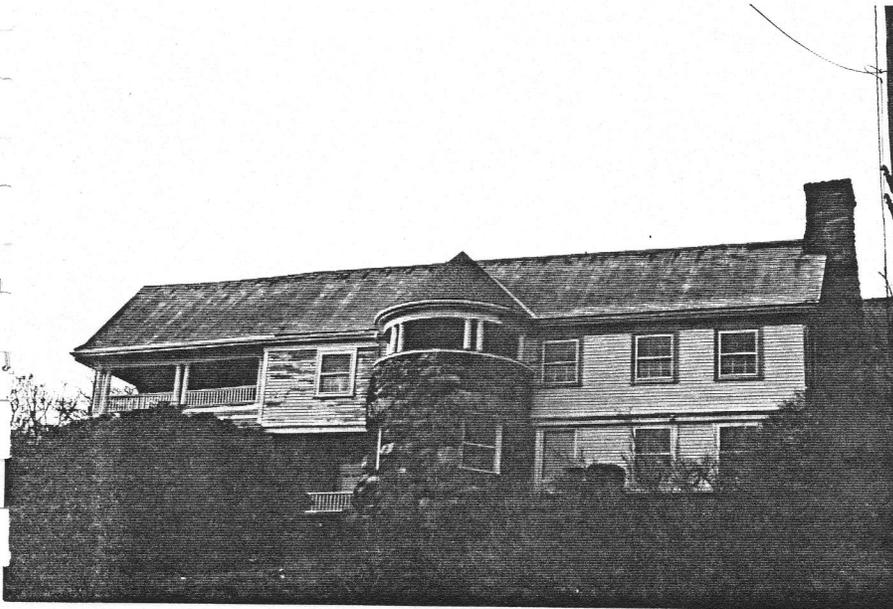


FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
	547



City Lexington

Address 83 Pleasant Street

Historic Name Fieldstone

Joseph Van Ness House

Use: Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1894

Source previous owner

Queen Anne with Richardsonian

Style Romanesque elements

Architect Blackall and Newton

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

Outbuildings barn, now under separate

ownership

Major alterations (with dates) porte

corchere with open porch above added

(date unknown)

Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 5.3 acre

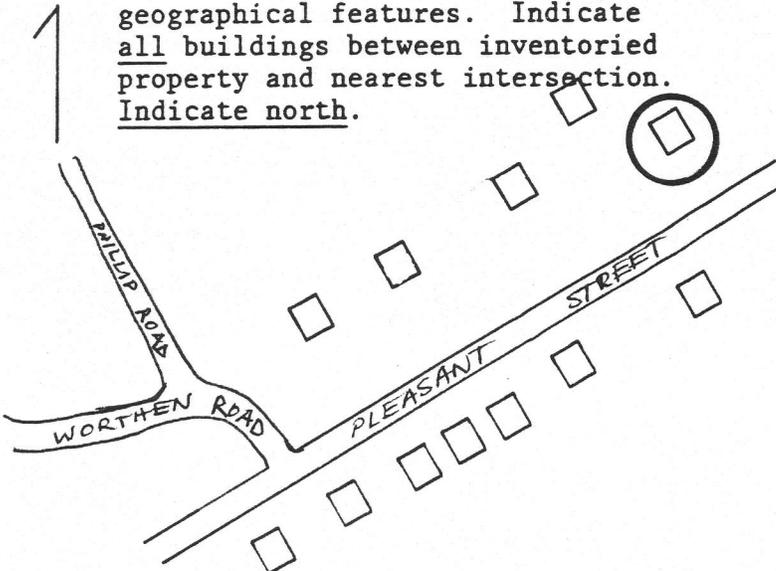
Setting A prominent site on eastern

slope of Moon Hill; sweeping fieldstone

wall marks the drive.

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 Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

An interesting blend of Colonial Revival design and very Richardsonian use of fieldstone, this house sits on a dramatic site above Pleasant Street. The semicircular fieldstone turret is the major design feature of the facade. The rear facade incorporates a palladian window and several other distinctly Colonial Revival features. See accompanying photographs of original elevation drawings.

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

The original owners were Sarah Bowman Van Ness, the last of that family to live in Lexington (c.f. Bowman Tavern in East Lexington Historic District and the Bowman house of c. 1650 off Watertown Street, burned c.1905), and Joseph Van Ness, who was the editor of a successful trade publication, The Superintendent and Foreman, and for a while conducted an advertising agency. Correspondence between the Van Nesses and the builder are in the possession of Peter Mimno of Melrose.

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

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, Volume II, p. 717. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Plans in the possession of the current owner.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

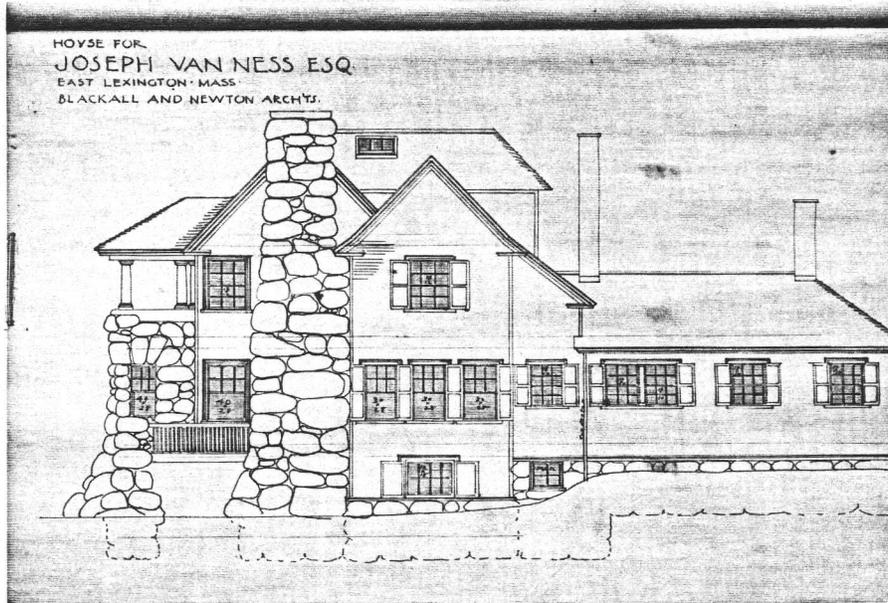
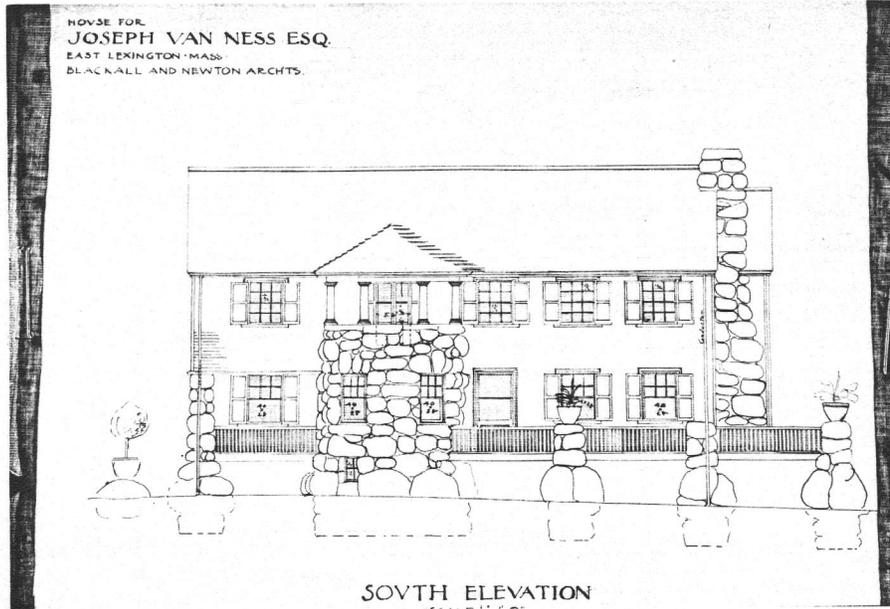
Lexington

Form No:

547

Property Name: 83 Pleasant St.

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



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

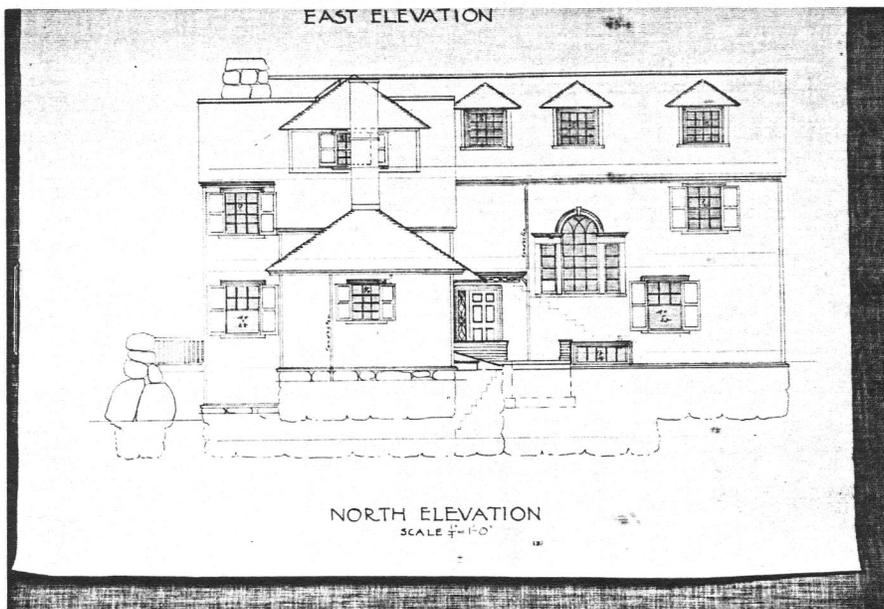
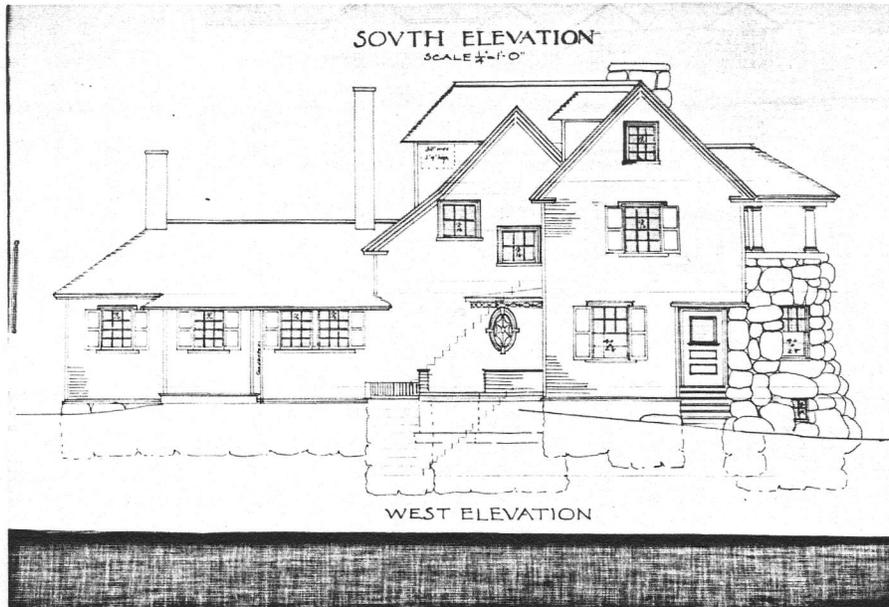
Lexington

Form No:

547

Property Name: 83 Pleasant St.

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



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: 547
Property Name: 83 Pleasant Street	

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



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON 83 PLEASANT STREET

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

Area(s) Form No.

	547
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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

According to the owner, the interior of the house includes a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace, built with local stone and incorporating a unique floral design created with stones within the background stone wall.

The house was designed by the architectural firm of Blackall and Newton (Clarence Blackall and George F. Newton). Senior member Clarence Blackall (1857-1942) was best known for his theater projects and it is estimated he designed 300 during his career. He was trained at the University of Illinois, graduating in 1877 and arrived in Boston in 1882. George F. Newton (1857-1947) was a native of Boston, educated in the city schools and completed his training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He worked in the office of Peabody & Stearns for many years and was responsible for the design of churches, public buildings and residences. Roughly contemporary with "Fieldstone" are Blackall and Newton's designs for two Boston landmarks - the Winthrop Building at 276-278 Washington Street (BOS.2111), the first steel frame structure in the city of Boston, and Tremont Temple Baptist Church at 76-88 Tremont Street (BOS.2070).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

"Fieldstone" was constructed in 1894 for Joseph Van Ness (1849-1901) and his wife, the former Sarah Bowman, who he had married in October 1892. In 1896 he founded a successful trade publication for the boot and shoe interests of New England, *The Superintendent and Foreman*. Joseph Van Ness died in 1901 at the age of 51, having been seriously injured in a railroad accident at Winter Hill several years before. Mr. and Mrs. Van Ness were the donors of the tract of land at the junction of Pleasant Street and Watertown Road which they gave to the town of Lexington for use as a park, to be known as Bowman Park. It was part of the original 200 acres purchased by the Bowman family. Sarah Bowman Van Ness, founded the local society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Lexington and the first meeting was held in this house. Mrs. Van Ness lived here for many years after her husband's death. According to the present owner there are two granite gravestones with poetic inscriptions near the front stone wall marking the graves of Sarah Van Ness's dogs. The property was purchased by Harry and Kate Mimmo in 1940 and they continued to own it until 1983. The present owners purchased the property in 1995.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Information from Andrea and Jonathan Gruber (current owners), November 2007.
Lexington Directories, various dates.
Lexington Minute-Man, July 13, 1901.
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Middlesex County Register of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.
Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Supplement prepared by:
Lisa Mausolf
Feb. 2009