

FORM B - BUILDING

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

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| In Area no. North Chelmsford | Form no. 128 |
|---|------------------------|

1. Town Chelmsford

Address 55 Gay Street

Name Royal S. Ripley House

Present use 1 family residence

Present owner Mrs. Edward Gaudette

3. Description

Date 1847 - 1853

Source deed, tax list (1853)

Style cape

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric asbestos shingle siding

Outbuildings (describe) right rear corner of lot temporary shed

Other features _____

Altered see attached Date _____

Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:

10195 sq. ft.
One acre or less x Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 118 ft. - Newfield St.
92½ ft. - gay St.

Approximate distance of building from street

ca 26 ft. (Gay St.); ca 28 ft. (Newfield St.)

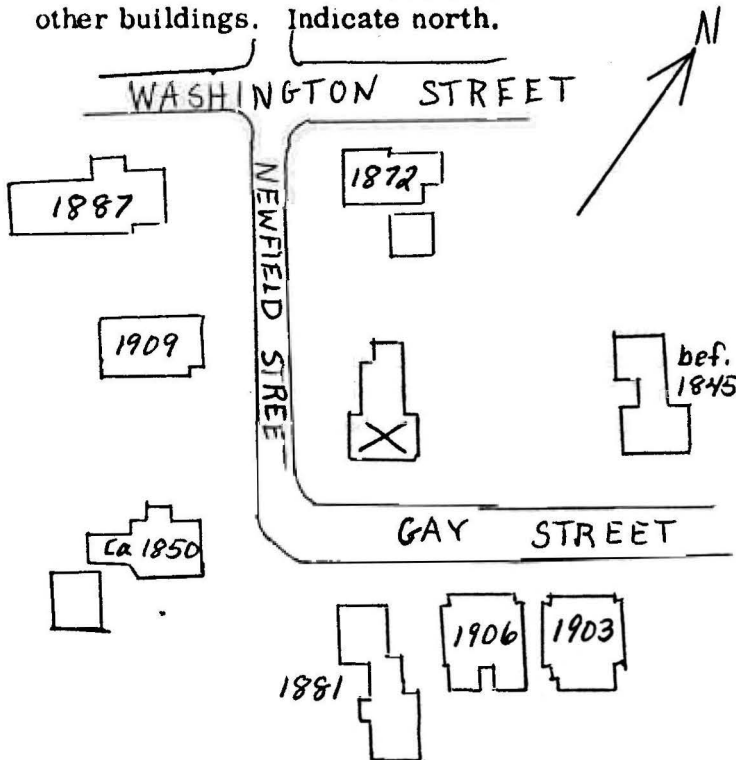
6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date May 15, 1987



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



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

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Joseph B. Pierce

Original use 1 family residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aboriginal | Conservation | Recreation |
| Agricultural | Education | Religion |
| Architectural | Exploration/ settlement | Science/ Invention |
| The Arts | Industry | Social/ humanitarian |
| Commerce | Military | Transportation |
| Communication | Political | |
| Community development | <u> x </u> | |

9. Historical significance (Include explanation of themes checked above)

In December 1846 Joseph B. Pierce purchased the house lot for \$10 from the North Chelmsford industrial partners, Ziba Gay, Harvey Silver, & Lincoln Drake. He was a machinist and probably worked for these men at the Gay & Silver Co. The house was erected soon after that and was definitely standing by 1853.

Joseph's wife, Mary, whom he had married in 1840, soon gave birth to four boys, one of whom died as an infant. By 1867 the family had moved to Vermont and Joseph sold the property.

From 1878 until 1944 it was owned by the Ripley/Clough family. Royal S. Ripley was a prominent man in North Chelmsford. He spent his teen years living with his parents at 75 Newfield St. (#138). In 1861 he served on a committee to secure enlistments for a voluntary military company and later that year enlisted as a musician in the 30th Mass. Infantry and served 4 years. He was promoted to "Principal Musician" and in later years became known as Col. Ripley. In 1903 he was elected State Representative and in 1908 the local Road Commissioner. In 1906 the North Chelmsford Fire District was established, and he helped select a site for the water supply. After leaving the Army in 1865 he became an iron founder at the Chelmsford Foundry. He soon rose to the position of agent for the foundry, in Cambridge. In 1907 he was "looking for a place to establish a steel mill in connection with his foundry as the place he has been using in Cambridge has been sold.....There is nothing in North Chelmsford suitable for his requirements and it is possible that he may be compelled to locate his steel mill in some town near Boston." Medford was finally chosen.

In 1892 Royal Ripley was ordered by the Court to remove a shed then standing in the rear of the house lot in violation of a right-of-way in a deed of 1872.

Following the death of Royal S. Ripley in 1913, son George and family moved in with the widow Abby. George was a master mechanic, working in Lowell. It was George & Helen's daughter, Helen Ripley Clough, who finally sold the house in 1944 to a "millhand", continuing the property's history as the home of manufacturing people.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Middlesex No. Dist. Reg. Deeds: Bk. 16, pg. 191 (1846)
Edward G. Gaudette - Mr. & Mrs.
Chelmsford Tax/Real Est. Valuation records, Vital Records, Register of Voters List 1877-98, Revaluation Records 11/9/1970 & 2/23/1982
1856 Walling's Co. Map; 1875 Beers Atlas; 1889 Walker Map
Lowell Courier-Citizen 9/22/1899; Lowell Sunday Telegram 10/25/1908
Chelmsford Street Directories: 1896/97 - 1943
History of Chelmsford by Rev. Wilson Waters, 1917: pg. 388, 372, 370, 437, 588, 768, 819

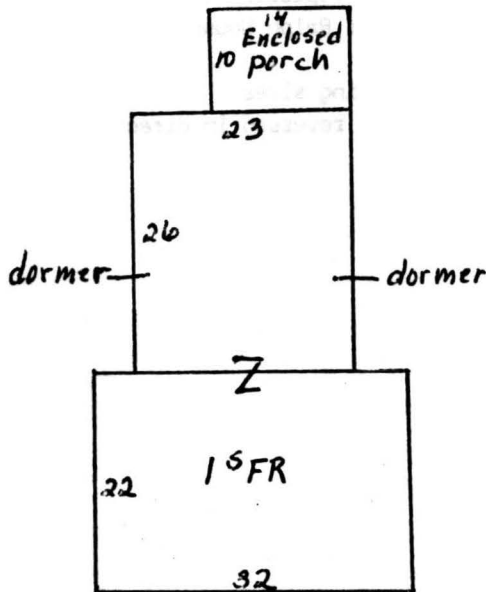
INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Community: Chelmsford | Form No: 128 |
| Property Name: Royal S. Ripley House | |

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

3. Alterations



1875 Beers Atlas
1889 Walker Map

Revaluation card: Nov. 9, 1970

1. Date? Direction of stairs probably reversed. Now go up from the kitchen toward the front of the house. Probably originally were in front of the center chimney.
2. 1908 Bathroom installed in dormer area on Newfield St. side. Dormers added at this time?
3. ca 1950 Asbestos siding put on over old clapboards
4. 1954 Fire - mostly smoke & water. In bedroom, next to kitchen - right (east) side of ell
5. 1962 Fire - mostly smoke & water, confined to kitchen. Kitchen then remodelled by Ralph House, builder New window frames - on right (east) side of ell, slightly smaller than old windows, but look same
6. ca 1964 Enclosed porch at rear of ell added.
Pegged construction barn built between 1862-67 removed. Was about 8 feet behind present location of the porch. (8 ft. north of porch)

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

55 Gay Street

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Bk. 1329, pg. 552 | 3/13/1956 | Edward G. Gaudette to Edward G. & Doris L. Gaudette land & buildings: northeast side Newfield, formerly Canal, & northwest side Gay St., formerly Silver St |
| Bk. 1123, pg. 205 | 9/02/1949 | William E. & Beulah R. Brady to Edward G. Gaudette, Lowell land: northeast side Newfield St., formerly Canal St., & Northwest side Gay St., formerly Silver St. |
| Bk. 1008, pg. 8 | 5/26/1944 | Helen Ripley Clough, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to William E. & Beulah R. Brady, Manchester, N.H. land: northeast side Newfield St., formerly Canal St., & northwest side Gay St., formerly Silver St. subject: right of way, 12 feet wide, at west end of premises |
| Essex Co. Probate Docket #201900 | 1/08/1942 | Estate of George H. Ripley to Helen Ripley Clough |
| Middlesex Probate Docket #155096 | 1925 | Estate of Abby A. Ripley to George H. Ripley |
| Bk. 234, pg. 179 | 7/16/1892 | Notice to Royal S. Ripley or William Faxton, Jr. building or shed & all other obstructions on 12 foot passageway to be removed |
| Bk. 235, pg. 17 | 12/01/1886 | William Faxton, Jr., Boston, to Abby A. Ripley land & buildings: corner Silver & Canal Streets subject: right of way, 12 feet wide, at west end of premises |
| Bk. 185, pg. 214 | 12/01/1886 | Royal S. Ripley to William Faxon Jr., Boston land & buildings: corner Silver & Canal streets subject: right of way, 12 feet wide, at west end of premises |
| Bk. 130, pg. 121 | 7/11/1878 | George T. Sheldon to Royal S. Ripley land & buildings: corner Silver & Canal streets subject: right of way, 12 feet wide, at west end of premises |
| Bk. 89, pg. 33 | 9/13/1872 | Samuel T. Wright to George T. Sheldon \$1825 & \$1000 mortgage land & buildings: corner Silver & Canal streets subject: right of way, 12 feet wide, at west end of premises |
| Bk. 86, pg. 247 | 10/05/1871 | Haven F. Leavitt to Samuel T. Wright \$1700 23,637½ ft. land & buildings: corner Canal & Silver & Washington streets |
| Bk. 56, pg. 232 | 3/15/1867 | Joseph B. Pierce, Hartford, Vt., to Haven F. Leavitt \$1200 23,637½ ft. & buildings: corner Silver, Canal & Washington st |

North: bk. 16, pg. 191
South: bk. 496, pg. 558

12/08/1846

Ziba Gay, Nashville, N.H.; Harvey Silver; Lincoln
Drake, Easton, to
Joseph B. Pierce, machinist
\$10
3 2/5 sq. rods land

Compiled by J. Drury, March 1984



'Royal S Ripley House' 55 Gay Street

8/8/2004 F Merriam