

**FORM B – BUILDING**

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

93/357/18 Billerica 3

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

Town Chelmsford

Place (neighborhood or village) Chelmsford Center

Address 78 High Street

Historic Name S. Waldo Parkhurst House

Uses: Present 1 family dwelling

Original 1 family dwelling

Date of Construction spring 1876

Source tax records; deeds

Style/Form

Architect/Builder local builders A.G. Green & Samuel Hagerman

Exterior Material:

Foundation Main house: granite blocks (some need repointing); rear former shed area: fieldstone

Wall/Trim clapboard

Roof slate; hip style; 2 narrow chimneys

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures barn: 1 story with loft, built spring of 1891

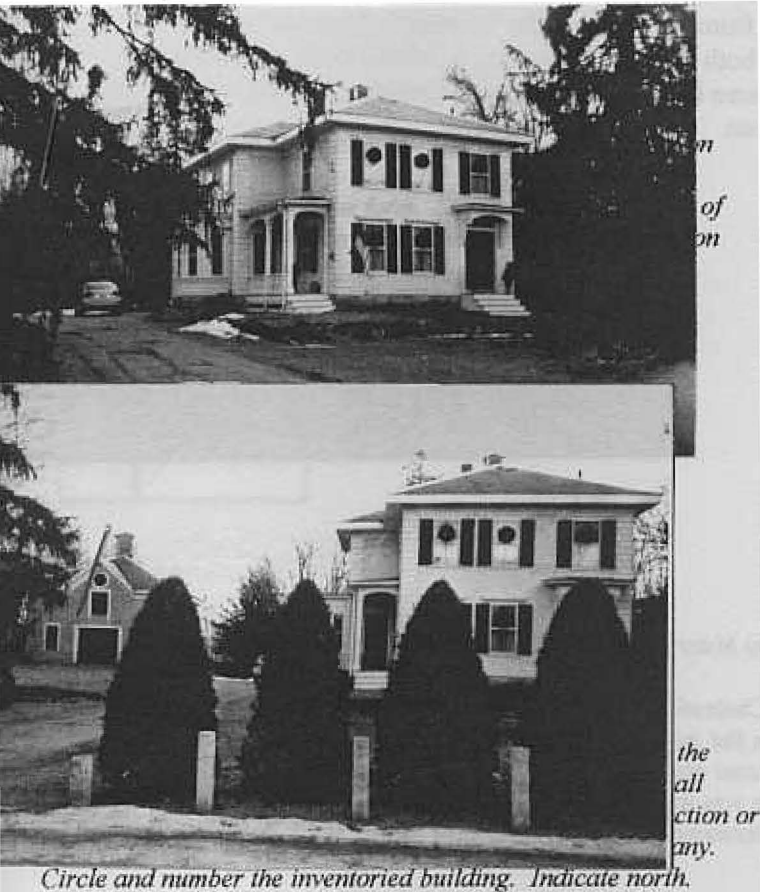
Major Alterations (with dates) 1963/4 see continuation sheet

Condition good/excellent

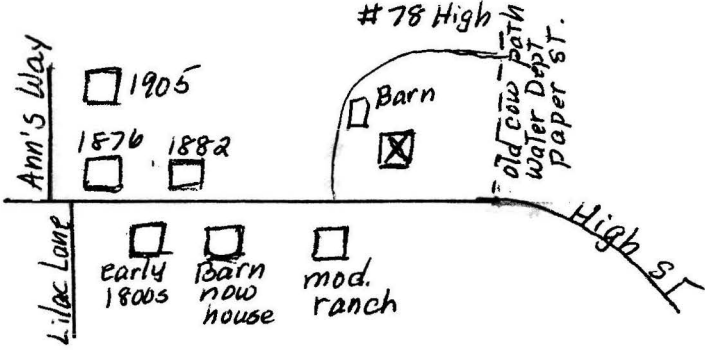
Moved  no  yes Date

Acreage 1.40 acres

Setting at corner of High St. & Water Dept. paper street, Reservoir Rd./Shed Lane, a former cow path. Area is residential, a mix of very old, late 1800s and modern. There are light woods on 3 sides of the house.



Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month/year) September 2003

## **BUILDING FORM**

### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION** *see continuation sheet*

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

Following the Civil War there was a large migration of residents moving from Lowell into the "country", Chelmsford. The dwelling at 78 High Street is very typical of houses erected before 1900, both on High Street and in Chelmsford in general. A paved driveway leads about 70 feet from High Street up to the house, where it widens for parking. Quoins are at the corners, and dentils are under the eaves of the hip roof and of the front Victorian portico. Two small porches are each side of a one story bay window on the left side of the main house.

### **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.*

The first owner of this house, S. Waldo Parkhurst, was a live-long resident of Chelmsford. As a young man he assisted in carrying on the farm where he was born, across the street at 67 High St. He then was engaged in the milk business, supplying Lowell patrons, the route being considered one of the best in that city. Soon after selling that business, he became engaged in the grocery & general merchandise business in the center of Chelmsford. In 1890 he was appointed postmaster, and that office was transferred into his store. However, he resigned that post three years later, as he felt he could not give sufficient attention to his primary business. For more than 40 years he was actively engaged in the grocery business.

In Nov. 1875 he purchased the land at 78 High St. from his father, and the house was soon erected. The family moved in June 1<sup>st</sup> 1876. He and his wife, Martha, had been married about 15 years by that time. They raised four children here, Willis B., G. Thomas, Bertha, and Emma, all but Thomas remaining in the house all their lives. Willis worked as machinist at the Sac-Lowell shops but music and photography became hobbies. During 1888- 1912 he took the pictures of the house & barn which are included with this inventory. Thomas worked first as a job printer in Lowell and then became proprietor of the Parkhurst Press in his father's store building. Bertha worked as a bookkeeper at her father's store, where her sister Emma was a clerk. Emma, like her mother and siblings studied music and was well known in music circles. She taught music for most of her career and for 45 years was the organist at the Unitarian Church.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES** *see continuation sheet*

Assessors' & tax records

Street Directories

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Bk. 116, pg. 50 (Nov. 11, 1875)

Diary of S.W. Parkhurst (incomplete)

Lowell Weekly Journal: July 31, 1891; undated obituary of Willis Parkhurst

Chelmsford Newsweekly: February 11, 1954, pg. 5

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

Town  
CHELMSFORD

Property Address  
78 HIGH ST.

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

Area(s) Form No.

	3
--	---

## History

The barn, erected in 1891, was said to be "a model of its kind, not by reason of its size but for its handsome exterior and the completeness of its appointments for equine comfort." It was built by John L. Douglass, who also lived on High St. The carpenter's bill came to \$1037.50, and the cellar cost \$100.00. We know that Mr. Parkhurst did make a few changes later, for his incomplete diary said, "Dec. 27, 1907 made new stable floor in right hand stall. July 1, 1908 made box stall. Sat. Jan. 11, 1908 divided bulkhead." The barn has no bulkhead, but the house does, on the right side of the main house. The bulkhead had granite fieldstone sides. Its wooden door is being replaced Sept. 2003 with a metal one. In addition to his milk business, Mr. Parkhurst grew a small apple and pear orchard behind the house. Among the flowers grown in the greenhouse at the back of the house were 24 tea roses set out March 1883 costing just over \$6.

Mrs. Martha Parkhurst died in 1912, having suffered with a bronchial condition which developed into pneumonia. Twelve years later her husband, S. W. Parkhurst, developed a cold from which he was unable to overcome. In 1962 their daughter Bertha died, having transferred ownership of 78 High Street to her niece Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Parkhurst. For almost 30 years the house was rented out. In 1991 Eleanor sold it to John and Catherine Crawford, ending 115 years of Parkhurst ownership. The Crawfords had been renting the house since the mid 1960s.

The house & barn have been painted in various colors, sometimes in two colors. Since the 1950s it has been bayberry green with yellow trim, gray, and is now yellow

## Alterations

- Sept. 2003 The bulkhead, probably the one put in on Jan 11, 1908, had the wooden door replaced with a metal one  
It is no longer a divided bulkhead, as mentioned in the 1908 diary of Mr. Parkhurst.
- 1963-4 When Eleanor Parkhurst inherited the property, she made several changes to the rear area of the house.  
The greenhouse and privy at the very end were removed.  
The carriage house between the privy site and a porch became part of the living area. A door from the carriage house was removed from the right side of the house.  
The porch in front of the carriage house and the main house was slightly changed.  
Concrete steps leading to the front portico were replaced with wooden ones.
- 1963 or before
- 1921, Nov. Cupola on top of the house was removed.
- 1921, Nov. Electric wiring for lights installed in house
- 1917, July Cold room made in cellar; its boards cost \$3.92
- 1899, Sept. Radiator installed in one bedroom
- 1898, fall Copper lightning rods put on house. Located well up on the hill, the house & barn easily attracted lightning.
- 1897, Oct. Concrete walk from the house to the barn was put in. It is not know when it was removed, but nothing will grow there now, in 2003.
- 1891, fall well at the barn was dug by J. Higgins & L.K. Howard, costing \$212.
- 1888, June Concrete walks put in to the front of the house, at a cost of 60¢ per yard.
- 1884, Dec. House warmed by steam, at a cost of \$220. A new boiler was installed Sept. 1899.
- 1876, 1899 Lightning rods installed one barn/and or house
- 1876, spring Board fence on the east side of the land was put up. It was taken down May 1883.

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds  
78 High Street

Book 1583, pg. 570	2/16/1962	Bertha A. Parkhurst to Eleanor Parkhurst 1.39 acres & buildings thereon northwest lot - Corey plan
Book 116, pg. 52	2/16/1876 MORTGAGE	S. Waldo Parkhurst to Helen G. Webster \$450 1.39 acres & buildings thereon northwest lot - Corey plan
Book 116, pg. 50	11/11/1875	Solomon Parkhurst to S. Waldo Parkhurst \$243.25 1.39 acres land northwest lot - Corey plan

Compiled by J. Drury  
February 2, 1977



Before 1888

Aug. 1, 1910 - S.W. Parkhurst of High street, who has each year a fine display of these beautiful flowers (dahlias), finds them affected by the dry season this year, but had the first one in full bloom on June 27, an unusually early date.

Aug. 29, 1910 - Willis B. Parkhurst is at his home in High street for a week's vacation.

May 10, 1911 - There were numerous callers at the home of S.W. Parkhurst in High street today, to extend to him their congratulations and good wishes on the 75th anniversary of his birth. Mr. Parkhurst has been a lifelong resident of the town and was born within a stone's throw of his present home. Among those having part in the business life of the town, his participation exceeds that of any now engaged, having successfully conducted the general store of the village for more than 33 years.

July 3, 1911 - Hot at Chelmsford today? Yes indeed, not with a hotness that established new records in every direction. And is not only hotter than Sunday when the limit seemed to have been reached, but Sunday's breeze was missed and its absence was sincerely mourned. The following top notch figures were recorded by thermometers not reached by the sun:

Mrs. W.R. Fowle, Billerica st.	106
Edwin C. Perham, Westford st.	105
S.W. Parkhurst, High st.	105
Miss Emma Holt, Billerica st.	103
James S. Byam, Westford st.	105
Mrs. A.G. Greene, Centre st.	102

**CHELMSFORD.**

Chelmsford, Jan. 25.—On Monday, Jan. 29, a visiting day for the teachers of all the schools in town will be observed. As a reward for attaining a required percentage of attendance for the month, the pupils in the various rooms at the Centre school, meriting such a privilege will be dismissed at an earlier hour on Friday afternoon.

Although still extremely weak, it is a pleasure to say that the condition of Mrs. Amasa Howard continues to make favorable progress.

In a letter written from Los Angeles, California, on Jan. 17, to Mrs. Leonard Spaulding, Frank Upham and his sister who are traveling through California this winter, tell of a temperature of 38 degrees on that day and of other conditions favorable to that delightful atmosphere. At that time residents of Chelmsford were enjoying (?) a near zero condition of weather.

A sleighride party by the Christian Endeavor society of the Central Baptist church, scheduled for tonight has been postponed until the first of next week.

This morning the mercuries averaged to be close to the zero mark, and although the sun shone brightly all day, it was one of the hardest days of the winter to be out in.

The topic of the Friday evening prayer meeting at the Central Congregational church will be "The Hidden Source of Help." Luke 11:1-13; John 14:15-31.

The passing of Mrs. Martha J. Parkhurst has taken from us a rare woman as one who knew her well expresses it. The memory of her beautiful life is a rich legacy—a comfort and an inspiration to those who knew her best.

Mrs. Parkhurst was the daughter of Hildreth P. and Elizabeth J. Dutton, as has been recorded. Her birthplace was Hollis, N. H., but the family came to Chelmsford in her infancy and here

her life had been spent. Her mother was Elizabeth Jones Barrett of Concord, Mass., and Mrs. Parkhurst had deep interest in that old, historic town, one of her last visits away from home being to that place.

She was married to S. Waldo Parkhurst on June 5, 1862, by Rev. H. W. Morse, then pastor of the Unitarian church, of which she was a member. Had she been spared until the coming 5th of June it was hoped to take due notice of the happy event of their golden wedding. We read of "Nineteen beautiful years." Hers were "Seventy-three beautiful years." Exceedingly happy in her home life and devoted with exceptional devotion to her own, she yet found time to express her sympathy and interest in her neighbors and friends. That they appreciated her kind thoughtfulness, the many beautiful flowers sent for her casket gave silent testimony. Music and painting added much to her joy in life. She was radiant when a few friends gathered at her home and enjoyed with her this gift of music, which her children had studied and often enjoyed together. That her taste for the beautiful was real is shown by the fact that when she had passed the age of seventy years she took lessons in painting and left pictures highly prized by her own. And so her busy, happy life has gone out. May we, who were fortunate to know her, cherish her memory and live better lives because of our thought and knowledge of her.

Lowell Courier-Citizen

Jan. 14, 1912 - The death of Mrs. Martha J. Parkhurst, wife of S. Waldo Parkhurst, which occurred at 10 o'clock on Saturday evening at her home on High street, will come as a distinct shock and will be learned with sincere regret by her many friends. For several weeks past she has suffered from a bronchial trouble to which she was subject, and when a few days ago pneumonia developed, she was unable in her weakened condition to rally. Her age was 73 years, 10 months and 26 days. Mrs. Parkhurst was devotedly attached to her home life and by the many who were fortunate in her acquaintance she held in the deepest regard. She was born in Hollis, N.H., the daughter of Hildreth P. Dutton, and came to Chelmsford when a girl, where for many years her father was a well known business man. Besides her husband she is survived by four children, Willis B., Emma L., Bertha A., and G. Thomas Parkhurst, all of Chelmsford, also a half sister, Mrs. Mary E. Laws of Bedford.

May 10, 1912 - Mr. S. Waldo Parkhurst, whose connection with the business life of the town exceeds any of those now engaged, quietly passed the 76th anniversary of his birth today. Mr. Parkhurst was born and has always made his home in Chelmsford and for nearly 35 years has successfully conducted a general store.

July 5, 1912 - At S.W. Parkhurst's on High street on the 4th of July afternoon the mercury reached 100° in the shade. And again today at the same time, there was the same heat registered.

May 11, 1913 - Mr. S. Waldo Parkhurst, dean of the business men of Chelmsford, where he has conducted a general store for more for more than 35 years, passed the 77th anniversary of his birth Saturday.

May 10, 1914 - S.W. Parkhurst, for more than 35 years proprietor of the general store at the Centre, quietly passed the 78th anniversary of his birth today, the event being pleasantly marked by a family gathering at his home in High street.

May 10, 1915 - S.W. Parkhurst, senior of local business men, quietly passed the 79th anniversary of his birth at his home in High street today.



Privy prior to 1965



Dec, 1965



**78 High Street**

**Prior to 1889**





**78 High Street** **Barn construction in 1891**



**78 High Street**

**Barn, 1892-1895**



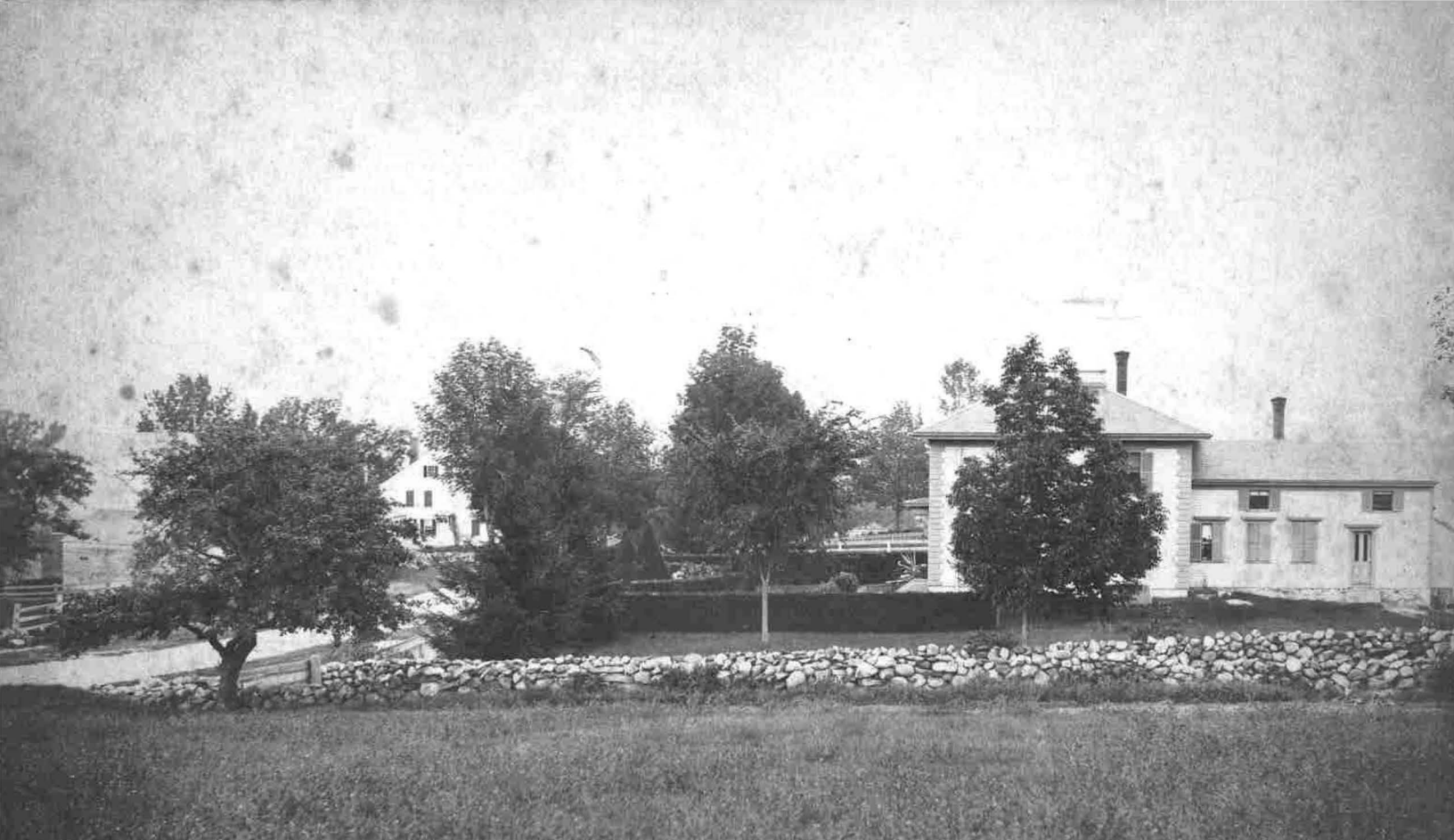
**Installing water pipe in front of 78 High Street**

**Prior to 1912, Willis Parkhurst**



**78 High Street**

**Prior to 1912, Willis Parkhurst**



**78 High Street taken from next door**

**Prior to 1912, Willis Parkhurst**



**78 High Street**

**Former privy site in 2003**



**78 High Street**

**Former carriage house in 2003**



**78 High Street**

**Barn in 2003**





