

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.12
Historic Name:	Ireland, Samuel House
Common Name:	Blodgett, Nathan - Littlefield, Rufus House
Address:	117 Washington St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	East Somerville
Local No:	180; 1076; 104-A-64
Year Constructed:	C 1792
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	No style
Use(s):	Agricultural; Barber Shop Or Hair Salon; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture; Commerce
Area(s):	SMV.AY: Somerville Multiple Resource Area
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (3/11/1985); Nat'l Register Individual Property (9/18/1989); Nat'l Register MRA (9/18/1989)



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING

NRWD/NRMRA 9/18/89

Assessor's Number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

104-A-64

Boston
North

AY

12

LHD-3/11/85

SEAB

Town Somerville

Place (neighborhood or village) East Somerville

Address 117 Washington St.

Historic Name Samuel Ireland House

Uses: Present residential

Original residential

Date of Construction ca. 1789-1792

Source deeds, genealogies, local histories

Style/Form Federal/ center hall cottage

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation (stone) concrete

Wall/Trim shingle/wood

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates) front entry
early 20th cent.

Condition fair

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 4708 sq.ft.

Setting tight urban lot on major

commercial thoroughfare

see attached map

RECEIVED

SEP 30 2005

MASS. HIST. COMM

Recorded by Arthur Krim

Organization Somerville Hist.Presv.Comm.

Date (month/year) August 2005

BUILDING FORM**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**☒ *see continuation sheet*

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

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES☒ *see continuation sheet*

☒ 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

Property Address

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

Somerville 117 Washington St.

Area(s)

Form No.

A7

12

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The rare early farmhouse at 117 Washington Street was likely built 1789-1792 for Samuel Ireland of Charlestown by an unknown housewright as his own dwelling. The house follows a cottage plan of one and a half stories with a five bay center entrance facade and two rear chimney stacks, set on a stone foundation original to the site. A right rear "jog" is possibly an early addition with the roof slope adjusted to the main gable by a pent roof and the foundation matching in form to the main cellar. The rear chimney locations and the right jog mark a late 18th century plan consistent with the presumed dating of the house by 1792, although no interior examination has been made. The evident design follows a simple Federal Style with tight gable eaves and two facade dormers with plain pediments that define the architectural detail. The interior possibly has a central stair hall with two rear fireplaces likely, although only the left chimney stack remains intact. A later addition of a left side wing and rear room are likely mid-19th century, while the front entry portico appears early 20th century in Colonial Revival pedimented form with the shingle siding. The Ireland farm originally included a barn as cited in deeds and shown on the 1874 and 1884 Atlases to the rear of the house, demolished by 1895 when owned by Elizabeth McCleary (see Historical Narrative below).

The Samuel Ireland house is of rare architectural value as the only surviving 18th century farmhouse of Charlestown to survive along Washington Street, intact with simple Federal form and a later 20th century entrance.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

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

Somerville 117 Washington St.

Area(s)

Form No.

Ay

12

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE-1

The rare early farmhouse at 117 Washington Street is likely dated 1789-1792 by deeds and genealogical research to Samuel Ireland (1748-1824) as original owner. Ireland was a yeoman farmer, son of Thomas Ireland, and grandson of Abraham Ireland, noted stone carver of the 8 Mile Marker in Harvard Square (Wyman 1879:541-43; Bahne 1997). The ascription to Ireland was made by Zellie (1980, 1982:14) based on a Boston University term paper by Kaynor (1979), from a Middlesex County Deed dated to "1792" (107-294). A search of Samuel Ireland in the Middlesex Deeds does reveal that he had assembled 5 acres of mowing land along the Cambridge Road (Washington Street) in Charlestown beginning in 1784 through 1789 with a mortgage to James Sherman in 1792 "with dwelling house and other buildings," (Middlesex Deeds 107-294). This deed sequence matches with deed descriptions for Samuel Ireland in Wyman (1879:543), thus confirming the likely dating of the Ireland house from 1789 to 1792, assuming the present house as 117 Washington Street. The dating also matches with the Federal Style features (see Architectural Description) for a house of the period. The Ireland property extended north along the Cambridge Road (Washington Street), east to the rangeway (Franklin Street), north to Ebenezer Shed and west to David Wood, later Nathan Tufts in 1815. The Ireland house is cited with the Joseph Barrell house of 1793 in a Charlestown survey of 1802 (Charlestown Land Records 1883:261; Zellie 1982:17) describing the two houses opposite one another on the Cambridge Road. In 1807 Samuel Ireland was declared "non-compos mentis" by his wife Rebecca, as "dangerously distracted" (Middlesex Probate 12284) with his estate sold at public auction in 1818. In 1824 Ireland prepared a will, with his property sold by his widow Rebecca in 1825. In 1826 the rear 2 acres were purchased by Joshua Littlefield who evidently built a house to the rear of the Ireland house cited in deeds of 1830 (Middlesex Deeds 299-250), and shown on the 1830 Hales Map. The Littlefield house was later purchased by Nathan Reed and shown on the 1895 Atlas as 2 Cottage Place (now demolished). After the death of Rebecca Ireland in 1831, the remainder of the property was apparently purchased by Nathan Blodgett from the "widow Rebecca Ireland estate" in 1839 (Middlesex Deeds 383-383), the only secure deed trace between the original Ireland farmstead and the present 117 Washington Street.

(continued)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

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

Somerville 117 Washington St.

Area(s)

Form No.

A7

12

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE-2

Thereafter the deed trace is confused. Blodgett evidently sold the property to Lucy Williams with a deed as yet untraced and resold to Rufus Littlefield, son of Joshua, in 1854 with a survey plan, as yet unfound. Littlefield sold the property to Benjamin Hadley in 1863 as shown on the 1874 and 1884 Atlases. In 1886 the property was purchased by Andrew and Elizabeth McCleary who operated a beauty shop for "sweet clover ointment" as advertised in the Somerville Directory (1896:786). The house was maintained by McCleary through 1925 and sold to Charles Spinosa, a Boston office manager with his wife Camella by 1940, maintaining ownership through 1980.

The Samuel Ireland house is of great historical value as the only 18th century farmhouse to remain intact along Washington Street from the Federal period beyond the Charlestown Neck in Sullivan Square, intact with original period features.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

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

Somerville 117 Washington St.

Area(s)

Form No.

AY	12
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S.Ireland), 254-217 (1824 S.Ireland), 299-250 (1830
J.Littlefield), 383-383 (1839 N. Blodgett), 699-276
(1855 J.Littefield), 903-596 (1863 B.Hadley), 992-574
(1866 B.Hadley), 1736-93 (1886 E. McCleary).
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Ireland House, left side-north



Ireland House-rear view-east
showing left-south rear
chimney stack.

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

Community Property Address
Somerville 117 Washington St.

Area(s)	FormNo.
117	12

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible only in a historic district
☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Arthur Krim

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

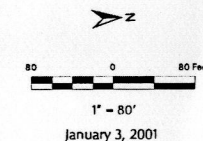
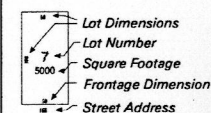
The rare surviving early farmhouse at 117 Washington Street was likely built in 1789-1792 for Samuel Ireland as original owner. The house follows a traditional cottage plan of one and a half stories with a center entrance, five bay facade, and two rear chimneys, of which only the left (south) stack remains. A right (north) rear side "jog" appears to be an addition of early date set on the same stone foundation as the main house with a pent roof adjusted to the main gable. The design is simple Federal Style noted by the tight gable eaves and the twin facade dormer windows with plain pediment gables. A left side addition and rear room are likely of mid-19th century date, with a front portico added in the early 20th century in Colonial Revival Style. Samuel Ireland (1748-1824) was a yeoman farmer with 5 acres of mowing land on the Cambridge Road (Washington Street) in Charlestown, beyond the Neck. In 1807 Ireland was declared "non-compos mentis" and the property sold by his widow Rebecca in 1824 after his death. The house passed through several owners until 1886 when it was bought by Elizabeth McCleary who ran a beauty shop at the address. The Ireland house is proposed for National Register consideration under Criteria C as the only 18th century farmhouse to survive on the Cambridge Road to Charlestown, beyond the Neck, now Sullivan Square.

City of
Somerville
Massachusetts



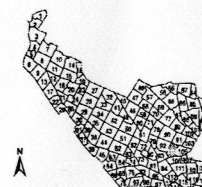
Assessors Map

- Parcel Boundary
- Block Boundary
- Assessor Map Boundary
- Water Body
- Building
- Railroad ROW



Sources: Rights-of-way and building footprints developed from Boston Edison Company data, 1995. Parcel data developed from assessor maps by Camp Dresser & McKee, 1999.

NOTE: The data represented on these maps indicate distances and deeded locations of cadastral boundaries in the City of Somerville. They are NOT survey data and should not be treated as such.



104



CDM

117 Washington St. SMV.12

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
BOYLSTON STREET
STON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

East
Somer-
ville

180 12

Somerville MRA

117 Washington

Name Samuel Ireland House

Present residence

Original residence

LOCATION

ca. 1792

map research

case-style cottage

Notes none



Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location
in relation to nearest cross streets and/or
geographical features. Indicate all buildings
between inventoried property and nearest
intersection(s).
Indicate north

Exterior Wall Fabric shingle

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) 20th c. window
replacements, dormers

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting The Ireland House faces onto one
of Somerville's major east/
west roadways.

Recorded by Betsy Friedberg

Organization Massachusetts Historical
Comm.

Date May 1986

See Attached Assessor's Map

Z E N

TM REFERENCE 19 - 328/150 - 4694/000

SGS QUADRANGLE Boston North

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Ireland House, the only documentable 18th century residence in the Lobble Hill area of far eastern Somerville, is a 1 1/2 story cottage that retains its original plan and modest decorative detailing. The building possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and fulfills Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

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

The five-bay facade of this small late 18th century house reflects the original arrangement of doors and windows, although the windows are 20th century replacements. Narrow strips of original moldings are still evident at the eaves and window enframements.

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

Samuel Ireland, a farmer and grandson of Jonathan Ireland, probably built this house about 1792. It is one of the earliest extant houses in Somerville, and the only documentable eighteenth century house in the Cobble Hill area. When this house was constructed, Cobble Hill was a geologic "cobble" running southward from Washington Street on the flats of the Miller's River estuary. Washington Street was a busy route between Charlestown and Cambridge. The mouth of Asylum Avenue, the route to Joseph Barrell's estate on Cobble Hill (later McLean Asylum) was opposite this house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Book 107, page 294, 1792 Middlesex Co. Registry of Deeds.
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