

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form1967  
OCT 10 1989NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Freegrace Marble Farm (preferred) Historic District  
other names/site number Dona Farm

**2. Location**

street & number 80 Burbank Road N/A not for publication  
city, town Sutton N/A vicinity  
state Massachusetts code 025 county Worcester code 027 zip code 01590

**3. Classification**

## Ownership of Property

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Valerie A. Talmage 10/1/89  
Signature of certifying official Executive Director, Massachusetts Historic Commission,  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register.  
☐ other, (explain):

Entered in the  
National Register11/13/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

domestic/single dwelling  
 agriculture/agricultural outbuilding  
 agriculture/agricultural field  
 funerary/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

domestic/single dwelling  
 agriculture/agricultural outbuilding  
 agriculture/agricultural field  
 funerary/cemetery

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic/Federal  
 No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation fieldstone  
 walls clapboard brick  
 vertical board  
 roof cedar shingle  
 other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Freegrace Marble Farm comprises approximately sixty-three acres in northeastern Sutton, Massachusetts. Burbank and Sibley Roads, two paved roads leading from Boston Road to the south, intersect in the southwestern section of the property. This intersection is the historic and present focus for buildings on the farm. A four-lane highway, the Worcester-Providence Turnpike (Route 146), passes within approximately 900 feet of the farm's northeastern boundary. Dispersed residential development borders the farm to the northeastern boundary. Dispersed residential development borders the farm to the northwest and southwest, commercial development on Route 146 to the northeast, and contemporary suburban development along Sibley Road to the southeast. Across Burbank Road to the west is Sibley Reservoir.

Comprising meadow, woodland, and wetland, Marble Farm (Photo #1) ranges across two drumlins, one each at the northern and southern ends of the property. In the vale created by the drumlins is a stream that bisects the farm from west to east, beginning at Sibley Reservoir. A small pond was created by the damming of the stream, which is spanned by a low stone bridge to the northeast; a spring is located further to the east. Along this stream is clear evidence of the old cowpath, lined with trees, leading to the northeast pasture. A second stream bisects the northeastern section of the farm from north to southeast, meeting the first stream in a wooded area. Walls of uncut stone define most fields on the farm, as well as the paddock east of the farmyard and a former vegetable garden on the southwestern boundary of the property. [See sketch maps]

Roughly divided between open and timbered land, Marble Farm is noteworthy for its range of soil types: Sutton loam, Charlton loam, meadow soils, Paxton loam, and Gloucester fine sandy loam. Each of the soils present is suited to one or more farm uses (e.g., vegetables, orchards, meadow, grains, hay-mowing, pasture, and woodlot). Currently, haying and lumbering are the principal activities on the farm.

An abandoned colonial road passing northeast through the farm connects Burbank Road to a private cemetery at the northern end of the property. The road is marked by a gate at Burbank Road but growth in the pastures currently obscures any visual evidence of its path. The cemetery is roughly 100 feet square, defined by the same stone walls that mark fields elsewhere on the farm. Approximately thirty gravestones are extant. Many inscriptions are

☒ See continuation sheet

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## 6. Historic Functions (continued)

Domestic / Secondary Structure  
Agriculture / Processing, Storage,  
Facility, Animal Facility, Orchard  
Landscape / Garden, Unoccupied Land  
Transportation / Road-Related,  
Pedestrian Related.

## Current Functions (continued)

Agriculture / Processing, Storage  
Landscape / Unoccupied Land, Garden

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illegible due to erasure by the elements or sinking of the stones. Isolated instances of broken stones are attributed to vandalism. FreeGrace Marble (whose stone is undated) and a number of his descendants are buried in the family cemetery. The oldest known dated stone in the cemetery (1786) bears the inscription "N s M e," an identity currently unknown.

The farmhouse, barn, and ancillary buildings are clustered on the northerly slope of the southern drumlin, flanking the intersection of Burbank and Sibley Roads. The house occupies the southern corner of the intersection and faces Burbank Road to the west. To the north across Sibley Road is the farmyard, defined by a stone wall at the intersection, the barn, and an equipment shed. A second, smaller barn is extant east of the equipment shed. Each of these buildings is described in detail below. One of the farm's owners currently resides in a trailer parked in the farmyard. Given its recent addition to the property and its impermanent nature, the trailer has not been included in the count of district resources.

Evolution and Present Appearance of the Main House

The farmhouse (Photo #2) is the oldest building on the farm. A 1 1/2-story clapboarded dwelling of plank construction on a stone foundation, the house has a gable roof, five-bay facade parallel to the ridge pole, and double-pile, center-hall plan. Two brick chimneys of unequal size appear at either end of the house in front of the roof ridge. Essentially rectangular in massing, the house includes a one-bay, shed-roofed lean-to at the northern end of the rear (east) elevation (Photo #3). Oriented to the west on a southerly ascending slope, the house has a full cellar that is clad in clapboards where it is exposed at the base of the shed-roofed lean-to. Adjacent to the lean-to is a short driveway from Sibley Road. Fieldstone steps lead from the driveway to the house's rear entrance on the south wall of the lean-to. South of the house is a sunken terrace delineated by a stone wall parallel to the south elevation. Stone steps lead from the terrace to the level of the house.

The facade or west elevation consists of an entrance placed slightly left of center between pairs of windows containing double-hung 2/2 wood sash. The distance between windows and cornice suggests a stylistic transition in evidence in Cape Cod houses by the turn of the 19th century, reflecting the use of extended stud heights in houses of conventional frame construction. Full-length sidelights of four-pane glazing (each pane 9"x18") flank the seven-panel glazed door. The whole entry is contained in a plain surround with a broad lintel. Cornice, cornerboards, and window surrounds are unornamented.

The broad gable elevations on the south and north display a slight overhang of the end girt; this and other conditions suggest that there was an earlier house on the site oriented south, with the end girt on the present south elevation being the front facade of the original building (see below). A secondary entrance with a four-panel door and narrow, unornamented surround



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is centered on the south elevation, flanked by asymmetrically arranged windows containing 2/2 sash. Two similar windows, placed symmetrically, light a bedroom at the upper level, while a smaller window with 2/2 sash at the roof ridge lights the garret. Fenestration is similarly patterned on the north elevation, with three asymmetrically placed windows on the first floor (plus a fourth in the lean-to), two windows on the upper level, and a small window beneath the ridge pole. In addition, two small windows (2/2 sash) on the upper level light storage spaces at the eaves. The north elevation also incorporates at grade a vertical board door to the cellar and an adjacent window. This exposed section of the cellar is brick on the exterior, with clapboards on the rear stairhall in the lean-to.

The east elevation contains the rear entrance of the house by way of the south side of the lean-to. The door, apparently the oldest exterior door in the house, is a double-sheathed vertical board door secured with hand wrought nails and still retaining its original arrow latch and strap hinges. Three windows with double-hung 2/2 sash are irregularly spaced in the main block with a fourth in the lean-to. Another window in the lean-to at the cellar level marks the former location of a three-seat privy under the stairs.

The house's original four-room, center-hall plan is largely maintained. On the first floor, parlors flank the hall with the kitchen and summer kitchen in the rear pile (see enclosed plans). A bedroom has been created between the kitchen and summer kitchen, accessible through the kitchen and lit by a single window on the rear (east) elevation. Beyond the kitchen is the lean-to/mud room at the northeast corner of the house containing the rear entrance and stairs to the cellar. The central stair volume connects the cellar, first and second floors, and the garret. At the upper level, a bedroom flanked by storage spaces under the eaves is north of the stairs with two bedrooms to the south. The southern rooms display evidence in both floor and ceiling of an old chimney near the exterior wall. In the garret, notches on the ridge pole indicate the original locations of two chimneys of different sizes built on different sides of the roof ridge, each located about two feet from a gable end.

The cellar consists of two parts built in different eras and connected by a doorway at the eastern end of the common wall immediately north of the central stairs. The southern half has a dirt floor and carefully cut and faced basalt walls. A long protrusion on the south wall indicates the presence of an earlier chimney stack. Beneath the northern half of the house, the cellar is not dug out completely. The walls of this cellar are of crude field stone, and the common wall is faced on the south side and left crude on the north side. A second, smaller chimney base survives on the north wall. The chimney bases and notches in the ridge pole confirm the existence of two interior chimneys. Late 18th-century chimneys and fireplaces in the house were removed in the early 20th century.

Some evidence suggests the existence of an earlier (mid-18th century)

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house on the site, constructed over the southern half of the present house. The south wall with its girt overhang is almost as long as the present facade and may have been the original facade for a house oriented to the south, the most common orientation for houses of the period. The present sunken terrace approximately twenty feet from the south elevation may have been a path from Burbank Road serving an earlier south-facing house. Finally, the dimensions of the finished cellar and the size and location of the chimney base in the southern half of the present house would indicate an earlier single-pile, center-chimney house on that foundation.

Interior finishes, however, appear to date to the late 18th century, including beading on boxed beams in the northwest parlor, as well as nails, pintles and straps, latches, and doors. Accordion lath with cut nails is exposed in the southeast room. A single gunstock post behind boxing at the northeast corner of the house may be a survival of the earlier house. Other notable interior features include the central stair with its beaded paneling and turned balustrade at the first floor, and the pegged stairs to the finished cellar consisting of steps of diagonally sawn timbers.

Construction of the present house, probably in the last quarter of the 18th century, involved a shift in facade orientation from south to west, necessitating a new north-south ridge pole, and the abandonment of the center-chimney, single-pile form for the center-hall, double-pile plan with an interior chimney near each gable end. Precise reasons for the house's reconstruction are currently unknown. Malachi Marble (1736-1810), youngest son of FreeGrace Marble, owned the farm in the late 18th century. Construction of a larger house would be consistent with the continued growth of his family following his second marriage in 1786, and the birth of his eleventh and twelfth children in 1787 and 1789, respectively.

As it appears today, the vernacular farmhouse is the product of updating and repairs over two centuries. The glazed door on the facade is a mid-19th century replacement, although earlier exterior doors are intact on the south and east elevations. The two interior chimneys original to the house were replaced with the present chimneys in the early 20th century; fireplaces have been removed. Renovations ca. 1932 included replacement of clapboards, corner boards, and rake boards. Window sash was also replaced at that time, in keeping with the fenestration pattern. The roof was shingled in white cedar in 1989.

Barn and Outbuildings

The barn and outbuildings are located on lower ground north of the house and across Sibley Road (Photo #4). A farmyard is delineated by a stone wall rounding the Sibley Road-Burbank Road intersection, with the barn on the north, an open equipment shed on the east, and a smaller storage barn southeast of the shed. All three buildings have gable roofs and vertical board sheathing, and incorporate 6-pane sash (fixed in the main barn and equipment shed, double-hung in the small barn) lighting gable ends or

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entries. While all three buildings are likely of 19th century construction, the complex suggests "the eighteenth-century pattern of small, discreet buildings for different functions, loosely clustered across the street from the farmhouse, "[Bowden, 12] in contrast to the connected, multi-purpose buildings that characterize the 19th-century farm. The present structures may have been built on the sites of the original 18th-century outbuildings.

Largest of the three buildings is the barn, a two-level structure of mortice and tenon construction. The barn is on a stone foundation with the floor of the main level resting on an outcrop of black basalt near the center of the building. Access to the main level is through a sliding door topped with a multi-light transom in the gable end facing Sibley Road. Access to the lower level is through three bays of vertical board doors on the west side opening directly onto Burbank Road. The barn is bigger than the side-opening English barns common in the subsistence period but appreciably smaller than the five-bay bank barns that became common in the mid-19th century during the height of prosperity of commercial dairying. [Bowden, 11] The barn was probably built after Oliver Leland purchased the farm from Simeon Marble in 1827.

The two remaining outbuildings date from the mid- to late 19th century. On the eastern edge of the farmyard is a rectangular equipment shelter with vertical board sheathing and gable end facing Sibley Road. Three bays without doors at the northern end of the west wall open onto the farmyard. The gable end contains double windows of six panes each on the first level and two single window near the roof ridge. Southeast of the equipment shed is the smaller barn with sliding doors on the long elevation that open directly onto Sibley Road. The barn is perched on walls ten feet high that open to the north. This structure has reportedly served several uses, from storing ice blocks cut from Sibley Reservoir to sheltering wagons.

Buildings Demolished

A town history of Sutton published in 1878 refers to three other buildings that once occupied Marble Farm. The house in which FreeGrace Marble (b. 1682, d. 1775) lived and died reportedly was situated on the opposite side of Burbank Road west of the present house. Across Burbank road and approximately 40 or 50 feet southwest of the present house was a former stockade Marble purchased from the town at auction. The building was used for religious meetings and other public purposes, and at one point served as a horse-powered machine shop for Joseph Hathaway. This building was reportedly razed by one of the Lelands. Finally, a distillery used for the manufacture of cider brandy was situated on the lower stream to the west of the pond, approximately 30 rods (165 yards) north of Burbank Road. [Benedict and Tracy, 390-391] The appearances of these early buildings are unknown, and all were demolished at unknown dates. All three sites have been indicated on the sketch map but are considered noncontributing due to a lack of information at the present time. It appears likely that these sites would yield information about the farm during the period of significance.

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While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded on the property, it is likely that sites are present. Four prehistoric sites have been recorded in the general area (within one mile). Prehistoric artifacts, possibly indicating an Indian campsite, have also reportedly been found near a spring northeast of the house. Photographs of a stone mortar and pounding stones have been included with the NR nomination form. Each of the factors listed above plus the physical characteristics of the property, several well-drained terraces along two drumlins on the property bisected by a tributary stream of the Blackstone River, would have made this an attractive area for native subsistence and settlement activities. Limited historic development on the farm and its size (62 + acres) further increases the potential for locating sites.

There is also a high potential for locating historic archaeological remains on the property. The present farmhouse and outbuildings each date to the 19th century, however, architectural features contained within the house as well as the configuration of the house, barn and outbuildings represents an 18th century pattern. Each of these structures may have been built on the sites of earlier 18th century structures from which structural archaeological features still survive. Structural remains of Freegrace Marbles's 18th century residence, the original founder of the farm, may also survive on the opposite side of Burbank Road from the present house. Other structural archaeological remains on the property likely include the remains of a "stockade" southwest of the present house used for civic purposes, machine shops, and the remains of a distillery used to manufacture cider brandy located on the stream west of the pond north of Burbank Road. A cemetery containing the remains of over thirty individuals, including Freegrace Marble and his descendants, is also located on the property. Oral tradition states that the northwest corner of the cemetery was reserved for Indian burials and contains a stone dated 1784, reportedly marking the grave of a native chief. Occupational- related features (trash pits, privies, wells) likely survive associated with existing 19th century structures and earlier 18th century remains. A restructured privy is present in a shed attached to the house, however, it is unknown whether or not this site is the same as earlier 18th and 19th century privies located on the farm. Colonial period wells are reported on the farm.

(end)

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

architectureagricultureexploration/settlement

Period of Significance

ca. 1763-1939

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Freegrace Marble Farm, Sutton, Massachusetts, is a farm complex of sixty-three acres located on land settled by Freegrace Marble, one of the town's original settlers, in the 1720s. Comprising the core of the early farm, the property has maintained a continuous association with Sutton's agricultural history from the mid-18th century to the present. A fine example of an 18th-century farmstead that has evolved over two and one-half centuries, Marble Farm includes a farmhouse, a barn and outbuildings, and fields defined by stone walls throughout. The farm also features a late 18th-century cemetery and documented sites of archaeological potential. The relationship of buildings and fields to circulation networks and natural features has been maintained. Retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, Marble Farm meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Sutton is an agricultural and residential community located between the French and Blackstone River valleys on a historic east-west corridor between Massachusetts Bay and the Connecticut River Valley. In 1704 a group of Boston proprietors purchased a tract of land eight miles square from John Wampus (alias White) and Company, Nipmuck Indians. The purchase included the present town of Millbury, set off as the North Precinct of Sutton in 1742 and incorporated as a separate town in 1813. Immediately to the northeast was Hassanamisco Plantation, a four-square-mile area established as the third praying town in Massachusetts in 1654. Praying towns were Christian missionary centers set up in the late 1600's by John Eliot and Daniel Gookin to convert Native Americans to Christianity. Hassanamisco was later purchased by colonials and incorporated as the town of Grafton in 1735.

Action leading to the settlement of Sutton was delayed by Queen Anne's War until November 17, 1714, when the first recorded meeting of the Sutton proprietors was held in Boston. The plot was surveyed and divided into house lots shortly thereafter. An early settlement in 1716 of three families in cabins near the present town center expanded to thirty families by the end of

☒ See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dodge, Reuben Rawson. Inscriptions in the Cemeteries of Sutton, Mass. Worcester:  
Charles Hamilton, 1898.

☒ See continuation sheet

Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Massachusetts Historical Commission

## 10. Geographical Data

☐ See continuation sheet

Sheet 10 of the Town of Sutton assessors map. See attached.

☐ See continuation sheet

The boundary of the nominated property, largely defined by stone walls, comprises the historic core of the Freegrace Marble Farm, and the extent of the farm intact as a single property since ca. 1880.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Kathleen Kelly Broomer, consultant, w/ Malcolm Pearson, Sutton Historical Commission		
organization	Massachusetts Historical Commission	date	August 1989
street & number	80 Boylston Street	telephone	617-727-8470
city or town	Boston	state	Massachusetts zip code 02116

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1717. The first house lots were located on the north side of the Oxford Road (Boston Post Road, now Boston Road) near Singletary Lake.

The first town meeting was held December 3, 1718 and a meetinghouse was erected in 1719. Constructed on the west side of the present common, southeast of Singletary Lake, the meetinghouse was adjacent to a burying ground, training field, and the school lot. Although some early settlement occurred at the meetinghouse location on the Boston Post Road in north-central Sutton, the general pattern of the town's colonial development was dispersed farmsteads rather than a nucleated village. Native American settlement continued to be present in the northeast section of the town near Hassanamisco/Grafton.

Sutton was a wealthy agricultural town during the colonial period, and its location on a primary east-west transportation corridor as well as the north-south Blackstone River valley was a significant factor in development. Population boomed in the mid-18th century, from 130 settlers in 1735 to 2,138 (including Millbury) in 1765, at which time the town was the most populous in Worcester County. Agricultural activity focused on dairy products and cattle, though throughout the 18th century Sutton farms also produced large grass crops and fruit harvests. Early mill privileges were located on Singletary Lake and in the north precinct, now Millbury.

FreeGrace Marble (1682-1775) was one of Sutton's first thirty settlers. Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, Marble was a mason by trade and reportedly worked on the Old State House (1712) in Boston. Tradition holds that his marriage to Mary Sibley was the first marriage in Sutton. The first of their five children was born in 1721. Marble served as one of Sutton's selectmen in 1727. [Benedict and Tracy, 687, 795].

Marble's purchase of land at the easternmost edge of Sutton's established settlement in the 1720s predates the establishment of Worcester County (1731) and thus is not recorded in county deed records. The fact that Marble previously owned property is mentioned in a deed of 1737, when he purchased ten acres bordering his farm from Simon Dakin (Bk. 9, p.118). The extent of Marble's holdings is uncertain, although he is known to have owned at least 268 acres, most likely extending north and east of the present farm between Burbank and Dudley Roads.

The sixty-three acres of Marble Farm constitute the core of the original farmstead, which was subdivided among members of the Marble family in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. On July 6, 1763, Marble conveyed a large tract of land in Sutton to each of his three sons for 300 each. Oldest son Samuel received 88 acres (BK. 72, p. 362), Enoch received 80 acres (BK. 237, p.322), and youngest son Malachi received 100 acres east of the present Burbank Road, including a dwelling house and barn (BK. 65, p. 12). Already married and the father of two children by July of 1763, Malachi kept his 100-acre tract intact until his death in 1810. In the interim, he fathered ten more children,

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marrying a second time in 1786. To Malachi is attributed the construction of the larger farmhouse, and the change from a single-pile center-chimney plan oriented south to a double-pile center-hall plan oriented west.

Following the death of Malachi Marble in 1810, the farm was divided between his widow, Abigail, and ten heirs, the widow receiving as her dower at least twenty-eight acres of pasturage and farming, mowing, and orchard land, as well as an interest in the house and outbuildings. Other buildings on the farm at the time include a barn, horse stable, wood house, and hog house (Probate Doc. 38606). In 1822 Ezra Marble, administrator of his father Malachi's estate, sold the heirs' share, comprising at least 64 acres and all buildings and privileges, to his brother Simeon Marble, a merchant from New Haven, Connecticut (BK. 226, p. 633). This 64-acre parcel, which was further divided among Malachi's heirs following the death of his widow in 1825, appears to have been largely reassembled in the third quarter of the 19th century. In 1827, Simeon Marble sold the farm, then reduced to 47 3/4 acres, to Oliver Leland of Uxbridge (BK. 276, p. 257). Oliver's son Austin Leland acquired adjacent parcels between 1868 and 1880 to enlarge the farm to its present acreage. Remaining in the Leland family until Austin's death in 1895, the farm passed to Victor Donais (Donal) of Millbury (BK. 1494, p. 276), and to the current owners in 1937 (BK. 2688, 289).

The private cemetery at the northern end of the farm is particularly significant for its association with the Marble family from the late 18th century through the mid-19th century. Extant grave stones and Sutton Vital Records to the end of 1849 document at least thirteen Marbles buried in the cemetery, although other family members who died in Sutton are likely buried here. Among the earliest known burials are those of FreeGrace Marble (whose stone is undated); Mary, first wife of Malachi (d. 1782); Mary Hall (d. 1795, age 6), granddaughter of Malachi; and Malachi Marble (d. 1810). However, the majority of known burials are for descendants of FreeGrace Marble through his second son Enoch, including Enoch's second son Maj. Alpheus Marble (d. 1807), his wife Anna (d. 1826), and at least three of their seven children: Capt. Samuel Marble (d. 1849), Hannah [Nora] Rice (d. 1844), and Alpheus Marble (d. 1830). Their youngest child, FreeGrace, great-grandson of the original FreeGrace (d. 1775), died in 1792 at the age of 7 years. Whether the undated gravestone in the cemetery marked the grave of the original Sutton settler or the child has not been determined. The cemetery also contains the graves of three great-grandchildren of Maj. Alpheus Marble, all of whom died in the 1840s, and James W. Barnes and his wife, who owned the farm immediately north of the cemetery in the mid-19th century [Benedict and Tracy, 390]. The oral tradition among the farm's owners that the northwest corner of the cemetery was reserved for Indian burials merits further investigation.

FreeGrace Marble settled between the flat-to-rolling lands of early settlement at the Center to the west, and the drumlin-and-wetland environment of northeast Sutton. Hassanamisco Indians were present on adjacent land to the east when Marble arrived and may have been responsible for the initial

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clearing of a portion of Marble's farm. Indian occupation of the terrace at the heart of the farm is evidenced by surface finds such as stone mortars and pestles near the spring northeast of the house. [Bowden, 16-18]

Each of the soil types on Marble farm is especially suited to one or more of the farm uses necessary to the success of a subsistence farm economy. Stone walls, intact from at least the early 19th century, mark historic field patterns and correspond to changes in the soil. The terrace, consisting of Sutton loam, well suited to cultivation of corn, oats, and vegetables, was for over 200 years the prime vegetable and grain land of the farm. The area south of the house, on Charlton loam, was partially left in a woodlot of hardwoods, undoubtedly providing the framing and finishes in chestnut, oak, and pine for the house. An apple orchard would have occupied the cleared area on the crest of the southern drumlin. North of the terrace, the land to the west is bounded by stone walls, and was used for permanent pasture and haying. To the east along the lower stream is an extensive wetland with sluggish drainage, an area presumably left by the Marbles as a water source for cattle pasturing further east. In the northwest section of the farm, on Gloucester fine sandy loam, five small fields of between two and five acres each are marked by stone walls. These fields were likely alternated between pasture and mowing, although traces of apple trees survive in the southwesternmost of the five fields. Finally, the main use of fields on Paxton loam in the northeast section of the farm, "certainly in the commercial dairy phase in the nineteenth century and probably also in the subsistence period, was for mowing." A portion of these fields was maintained as wood pasture into the part-time farm era in the 20th century. [Bowden, 12-22]

Historic land uses at Marble Farm reflect Sutton's agricultural development in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Haying, cattle raising, dairying, and fruit harvesting were the principal activities in the years up to the end of the Civil War. Sutton's eclipse by the neighboring town of Northbridge as the local core of economic activity reflected a shift in regional economic production from an agrarian to a manufacturing base. Agriculture remained strong, however, in light of the onset of textile manufacturing in Sutton in the 1820s. The market for Sutton produce and livestock grew and accessibility increased, particularly after the opening of the east-west Central turnpike (1824) and the Providence & Worcester Railroad (1848) through Wilkinsonville in the northeasternmost section of town.

Agriculture in Sutton and elsewhere in the region underwent a number of changes during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tending toward more specialized production on individual farms. Large-scale dairying was concentrated on fewer farms with larger herds, milk production per cow doubled as a result of improved breeding, poultry and swine raising also became concentrated on several farms, and large commercial orchards were planted. Marble Farm, then under the ownership of Austin Leland, probably played a limited role in these large-scale developments. The farm's production likely focused on the production of butter and cheese, the predominant 19th-century

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4FreeGrace Marble Farm Historic District,  
Sutton, MA

dairying activity which increased at the end of the century with the organization of several milk dealers and a local creamery. Haying and the cutting of firewood were also important locally and on Marble Farm, as large markets for these goods were found in nearby Worcester. Several farms in eastern Sutton were purchased and planted with apple trees in the 1910s, changing the nature of agriculture in that part of town from primarily dairy to fruit. The year of the chestnut blight, 1922, also brought an ice storm that destroyed many of the older orchards. After the hurricane of 1938, the era of the small farm orchard such as that on Marble Farm essentially ended. Agriculture remained the mainstay of Sutton's economy to ca. 1940, particularly after the collapse of the town's textile industry in the late 1920s.

The buildings on Marble Farm are typical of the dispersed family farmsteads that characterized Sutton in the 18th century. As noted earlier, the discreet farm buildings, each serving a particular function, are clustered and separated from the house in the manner of 18th-century farmsteads, unlike the multi-purpose barns often connected to the house in the 19th-century pattern. The farmhouse itself represents the most common class of building in 18th-century Worcester County, the single-story dwelling. [Steinitz, 21] Architectural and other physical evidence suggests that the present house is an updated and enlarged replacement of an earlier, single-story, center-chimney house on the same site. Construction of a larger house could be attributed to changes either in family size or in the social and economic relationship of the family with the community. [Stachiw and Small, 143, 147] Both factors may have influenced the decision to build a new house at Marble Farm. Between 1785 and 1792, Malachi Marble married for the second time, his eleventh and twelfth children were born, three of his daughters were married and possibly some of his sons. These changes undoubtedly created a need for additional space in the household.

Construction of another single-story house, with the updated center-hall plan and two end chimneys, instead of a two-story house may have been rooted in either stylistic considerations or financial circumstances. Although the two-story center-hall house first appeared in Sutton in 1767, the form remained uncommon, with no new two-story center-hall houses built again until 1794. The association of such a house in the post-Revolution years with Tory loyalists and British gentry may account for this phenomenon. [Bowden, 6] However, since two-story, center-chimney houses continued to be built in "architecturally conservative Sutton" into the 1790s, Marble's decision to rebuild in one story indicates that financial considerations may have been a factor. One study suggests that the farm may have been too small or too diverse in its soils and resources to specialize and take full advantage of new markets for dairy produce and vegetables in surrounding mill villages and towns. The new one-story house may reflect the family's already marginal financial position in the late 18th century. [Bowden, 6] This condition is still indicated as late as 1822, when the farm as part of Malachi's estate was sold to Simeon Marble, a merchant residing in New Haven and one of Malachi's

(continued)

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5FreeGrace Marble Farm Historic District,  
Sutton, MA

sons and heirs. The sale suggests that Simeon's brothers and brothers-in-law in Sutton, most of them farmers, were unable to carry the property.

Economic concerns continued to threaten the integrity of Marble Farm. The tremendous pressure of commercial and residential development along the Route 146 corridor north and east of the farm is of immediate concern. Also significant is gravel pit expansion, currently concentrated on the east side of Route 146 but also in evidence southeast of the farm. National Register listing would afford some degree of protection for this intact agricultural landscape.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6 Freegrace Marble Farm Historic District  
Sutton, MAArchaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric occupation in Sutton are poorly understood, any surviving sites would be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area could provide valuable information on upland settlement and subsistence along the interior Blackstone River drainage as well as the relationship between these sites and coastal settlement to the south along Narragansett Bay. Considerable research potential exists for prehistoric sites on the Marble Farm.

Historic archaeological remains on the Freegrace Marble Farm offer the potential for providing detailed information on the changing social, cultural, and economic patterns that characterized a continually operated uplands farmstead from the 18th century to the present. The farm's unbroken association with Sutton's agricultural history offers the potential for analyzing agricultural development at a minimum of three levels, including the individual who owned and operated the farm, the farm's place in the local economy, and how local agricultural economies were influenced by regional patterns. Sutton developed as a wealthy agricultural community in the Colonial period with agriculture remaining important into the 19th and early 20th centuries in spite of Sutton's 19th century industrial development. Archaeological and documentary resources associated with the Marble family can contribute greatly towards a better understanding of this development and the role Marble Farm played in it, particularly in the role of specialized production on individual farms. Information pertaining to social change can also be derived from archaeological resources. Information pertaining to changes in the family and their role it played in agricultural production can be derived from analysis of occupational related features and structural remains of now-extant farm dwellings.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 9 Page 1FreeGrace Marble Farm Historic District,  
Sutton, MAMajor Bibliographical References

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Reconnaissance Survey Report for Sutton, ms., 1983.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 1FreeGrace Marble Farm Historic District,  
Sutton, MAGeographical DataGrafton and Worcester South quads  
Scale 1:25000

## UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing	
A	19	273110	4671210	(Grafton quad)
B	19	272670	4670860	(Worc. So. quad)
C	19	272470	4671100	(Worc. So. quad)
D	19	272560	4671200	(Worc. So. quad)
E	19	272480	4671390	(Worc. So. quad)
F	19	272750	4671550	(Worc. So. quad)
G	19	272710	4671640	(Worc. So. quad)
H	19	272790	4671680	(Worc. so. quad)
I	19	272840	4671520	(Grafton quad)

FREEGRACE MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

Note: all street addresses are 80 Burkbank Road

Map #	Historic Name	Date of Construction	Style	Status	Resource
1	House	last quarter 18th cent.	vernac. Fed.	C	B
2	Barn	ca. 1830	vernacular	C	B
3	Equipment shelter	mid- to late 19th cent.	vernacular	C	B
4	Storage barn	mid- to late 19th cent.	vernacular	C	B
5	Cemetery	last quarter 18th cent.	---	C	St.
6	Landscape (Incl. hayfields, pastures, wooded areas, streams and spring, plus stone walls and stonebridge over lower stream)	last 18th/19th cent.	---	C	Si
7	House (demolished)	mid-18th cent.	---	NC*	Si.
8	Stockade (demolished)	mid-18th cent.	---	NC*	Si.
9	Distillery (demolished)	early 19th cent.	---	NC*	Si.

KEY

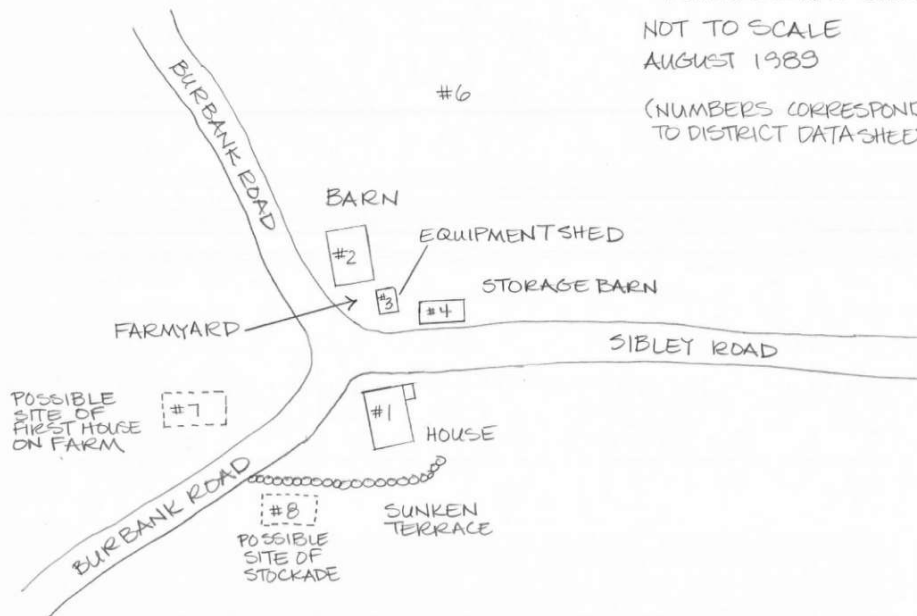
C = contributing NC = noncontributing  
B = building Si. = site St. = structure  
\* - noncontributing due to lack of information  
at the present time

DISTRICT TOTALS

	contrib.	noncontrib.
Buildings	4	0
Sites	1	3*
Structures	1	0
Total	6	3*

DETAIL OF BUILDINGS AND OTHER  
FEATURES AT INTERSECTION OF  
BURBANK AND SIBLEY ROADS

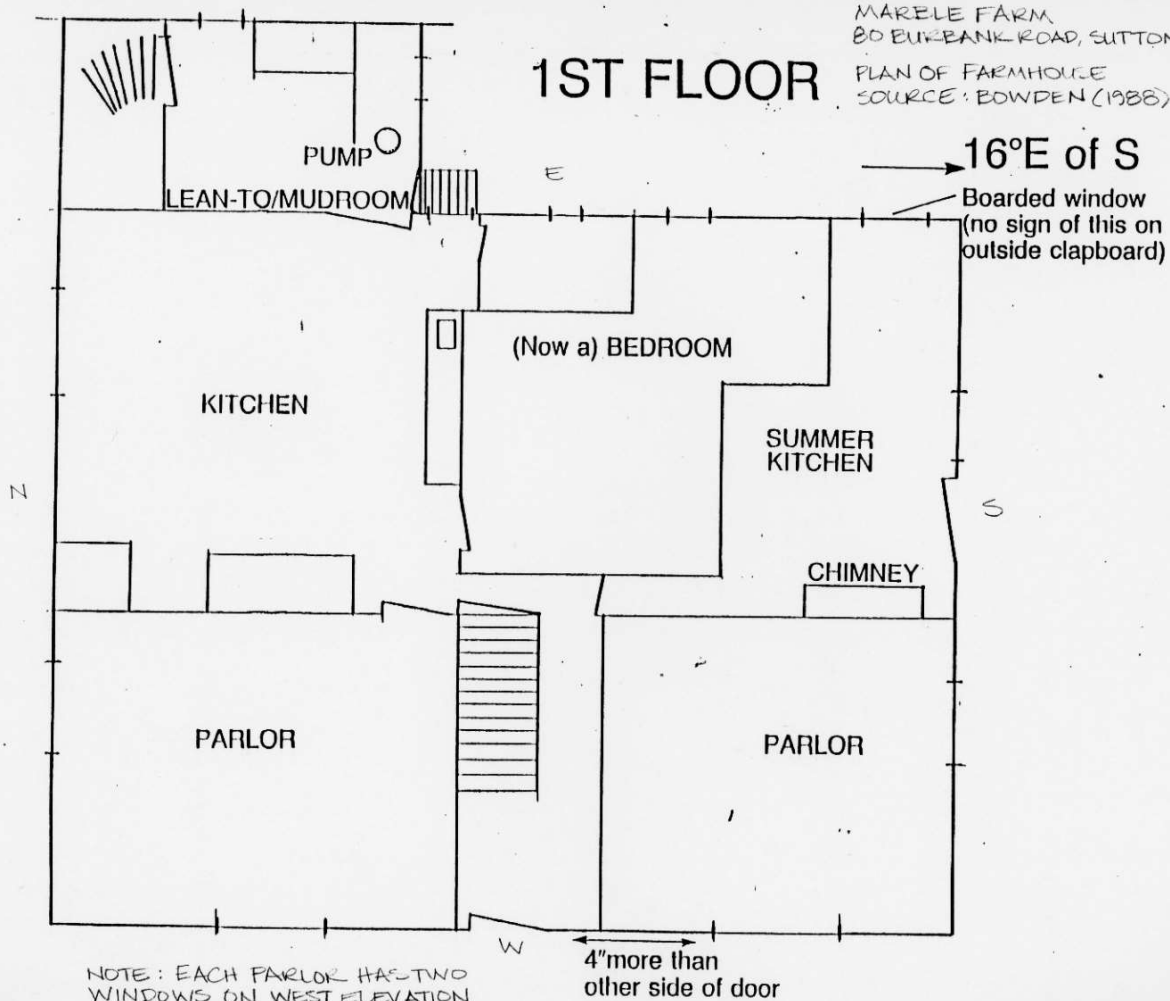
(NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO DISTRICT DATA SHEET)





MARELE FARM  
80 EUREANK ROAD, SUTTON, MASS.  
PLAN OF FARMHOUSE  
SOURCE: BOWDEN (1988).

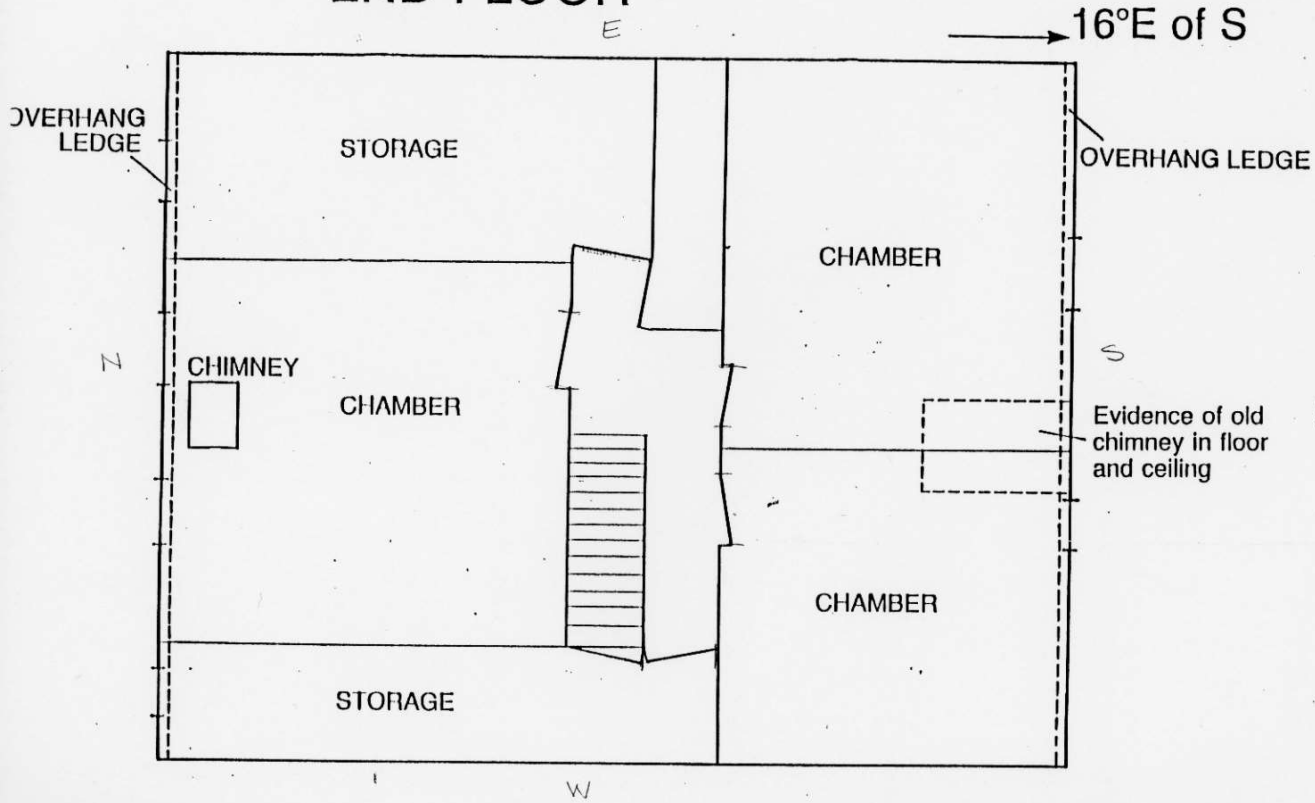
# 1ST FLOOR



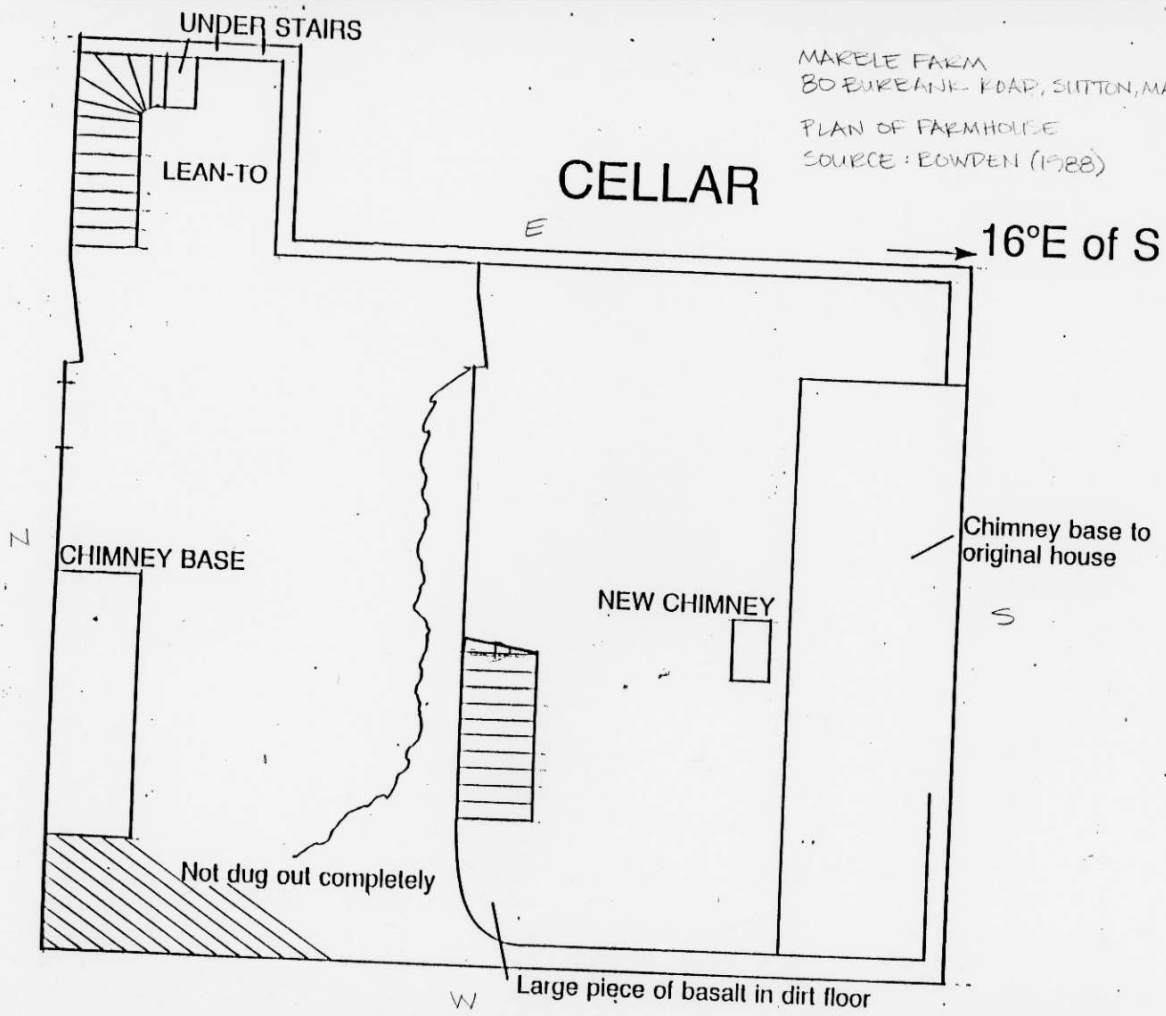
8  
MARBLE FARM  
80 BURBANK ROAD, SUTTON, MASS.

PLAN OF FARMHOUSE  
SOURCE: BOWDEN (1988).

## 2ND FLOOR



MAKLE FARM  
80 BUREANE ROAD, SUTTON, MASS.  
PLAN OF FARMHOUSE  
SOURCE: EOWDEN (1988)



MARBLE-  
LELAND-  
DONA  
Farm

SCALE 1:1,580

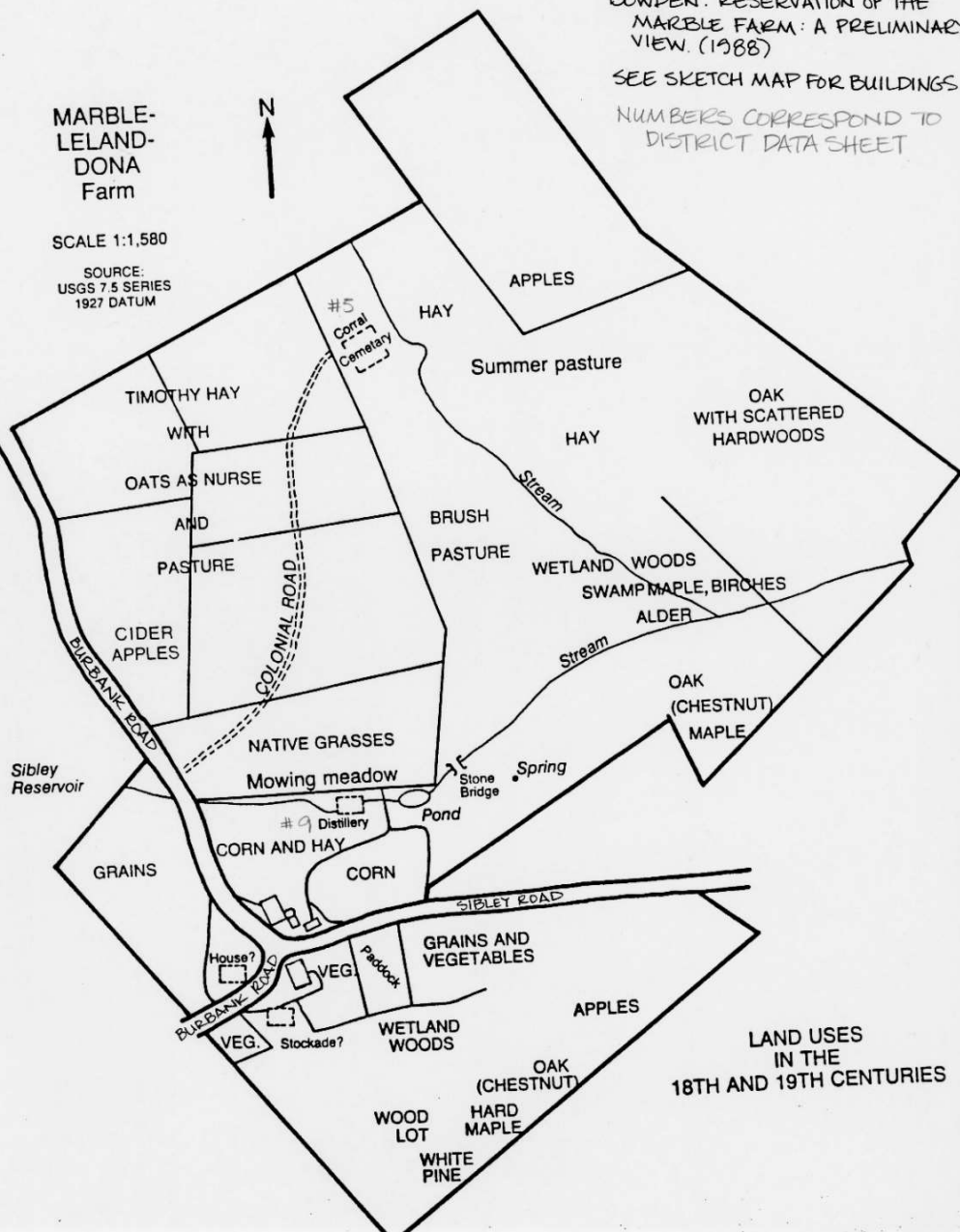
SOURCE:  
USGS 7.5 SERIES  
1927 DATUM



SOURCE:  
BOWPEN. RESERVATION OF THE  
MARBLE FARM: A PRELIMINARY  
VIEW. (1988)

SEE SKETCH MAP FOR BUILDINGS

NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO  
DISTRICT DATA SHEET



LAND USES  
IN THE  
18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Freegrace Marble Farm Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/25/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/10/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/24/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001967

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/13/89 DATE Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

---

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count      ☐ resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

☐ historic      ☐ current

---

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification  
☐ materials  
☐ descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ applicable criteria  
☐ justification of areas checked  
☐ relating significance to the resource  
☐ context  
☐ relationship of integrity to significance  
☐ justification of exception  
☐ other

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage      ☐ verbal boundary description  
☐ UTM's      ☐ boundary justification

---

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps    ☐ USGS maps    ☐ photographs    ☐ presentation

---

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



~~DONA FARM~~ MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 Burbank Road  
Sutton, MA 01590  
Photg.- Malcolm Pearson  
Neg. % Sutton Historical Commission  
Photo #24 of 2 1 of 4  
" View of farm buildings to south with pond  
in center foreground"

MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 BURBANK ROAD, SUTTON, MA 01590  
PHOTO: MALCOLM PEARSON 1989  
NEG: SUTTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
4 WYBRIDGE ROAD  
SUTTON MA 01590  
VIEW OF FARM BLDGS TO SOUTH WITH  
POND IN CENTER FOREGROUND  
PHOTO #1 OF 4





DONA FARM MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 Burbank Road  
Sutton, MA 01590  
Photg.- Malcolm Pearson, 7/14/89  
Neg. % Sutton Historical Commission  
Photo #4 of 2 2 of 4  
"W front elevation"

MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 BURBANK ROAD, SUTTON, MA  
PHOTO: MALCOLM PEARSON 1989  
NEG: SUTTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
4 UXBIDGE ROAD  
SUTTON, MA 01590  
W FRONT OF FARMHOUSE  
PHOTO # 2 OF 4



DONA FARM MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 Burbank Road  
Sutton, MA 01590  
Photg.- Malcolm Pearson, 7/14/89  
Neg. % Sutton Historical Commission  
Photo #3 of 2 PHOTO #3 of 4  
"N end & W front elevations"

MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 BURBANK ROAD, SUTTON, MA  
PHOTO: MALCOLM PEARSON 1989  
NEG: SUTTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
4 UXBRIDGE ROAD  
SUTTON, MA 01590

NORTH END AND WEST FRONT OF FARMHOUSE  
PHOTO # 3 of 4



~~DONA FARM~~ MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 Burbank Road  
Sutton, MA 01590  
Photg.- Malcolm Pearson  
Neg. % Sutton Historical Commission  
Photo #9 of 2- #4 of 4  
"West view of barn in relationship to house"

MARBLE FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT  
80 BURBANK ROAD, SUTTON, MA  
PHOTO: MALCOLM PEARSON 1989  
NEG: SUTTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
4 LUXBRIDGE ROAD  
SUTTON, MA 01590  
WEST VIEW OF BARN IN RELATIONSHIP  
TO HOUSE  
PHOTO # 4 OF 4



#3- N end & W front elevations



#4- W front elevation



#5- E back & N end elevations



#6- E end elevation  
South



#7- Front door (W)



#8- Flagstone steps to E ell



#9- W view of barn in relationship to house





#10- Barn buildings from house  
to north



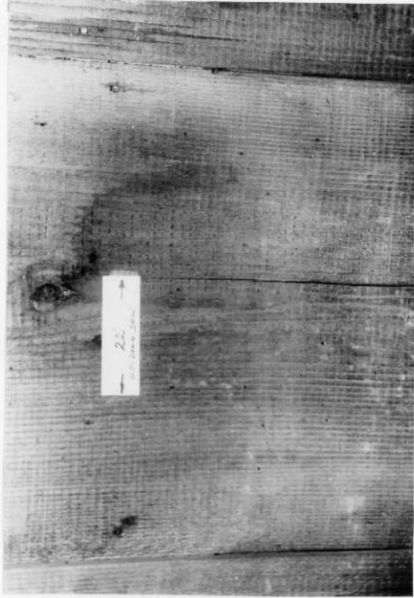
#11- Wagon Shed



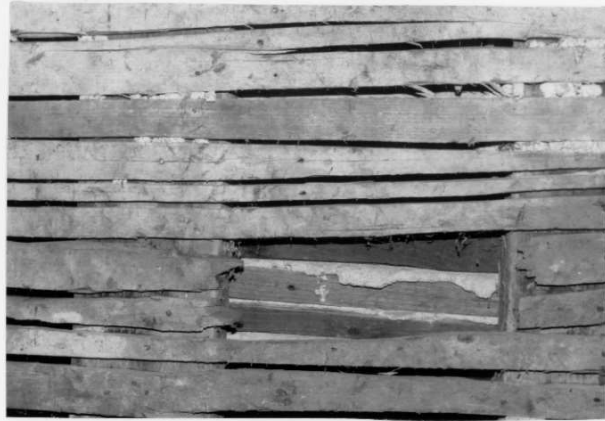
#12- Detail of roof beam  
construction



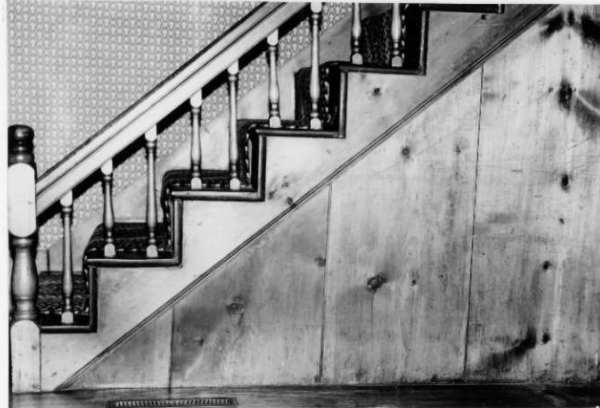
#13- Wide floor boards in  
bedroom



#14- 22" partition board  
vertically sawed



#15- Hand split lathes



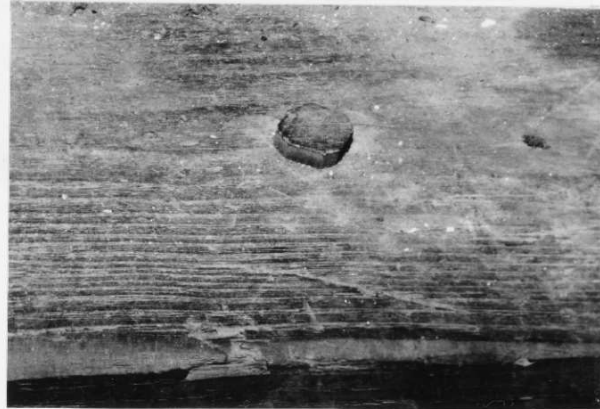
#16- Wide boards on stair-  
way to 2nd floor



#17- Gunstock post in  
kitchen corner



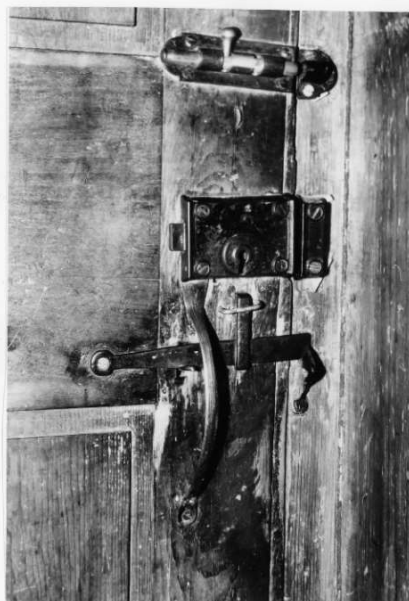
#18- Cellar steps from diagonally  
sawed timber



#19- Pegged cellar step



#20- Ell door hand forged  
latch



#21- Ell door inside lock  
and latch (original)



#22- Ell door strap hinge  
(original)



#23- View to north toward Freegrace Marble  
cemetery



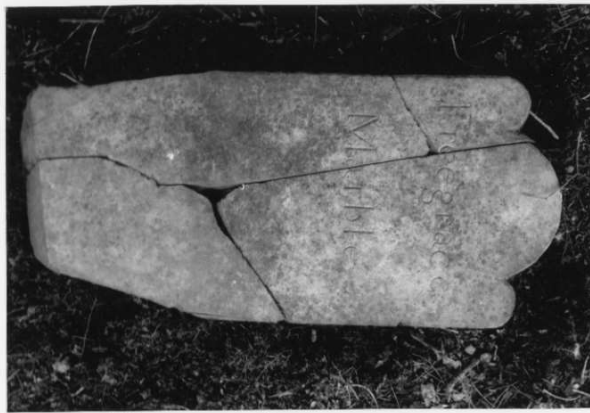
#24- View of farm buildings  
to south with pond  
in foreground



#25 View of farm buildings  
to east



#26- Freegrace Marble cemetery



#27- Freegrace Marble headstone (1799),  
vandalized 1986



#28- Presumably an Indian Chief headstone  
(1786) with inscribed "sign" buried with  
other Indians in Marble cemetery



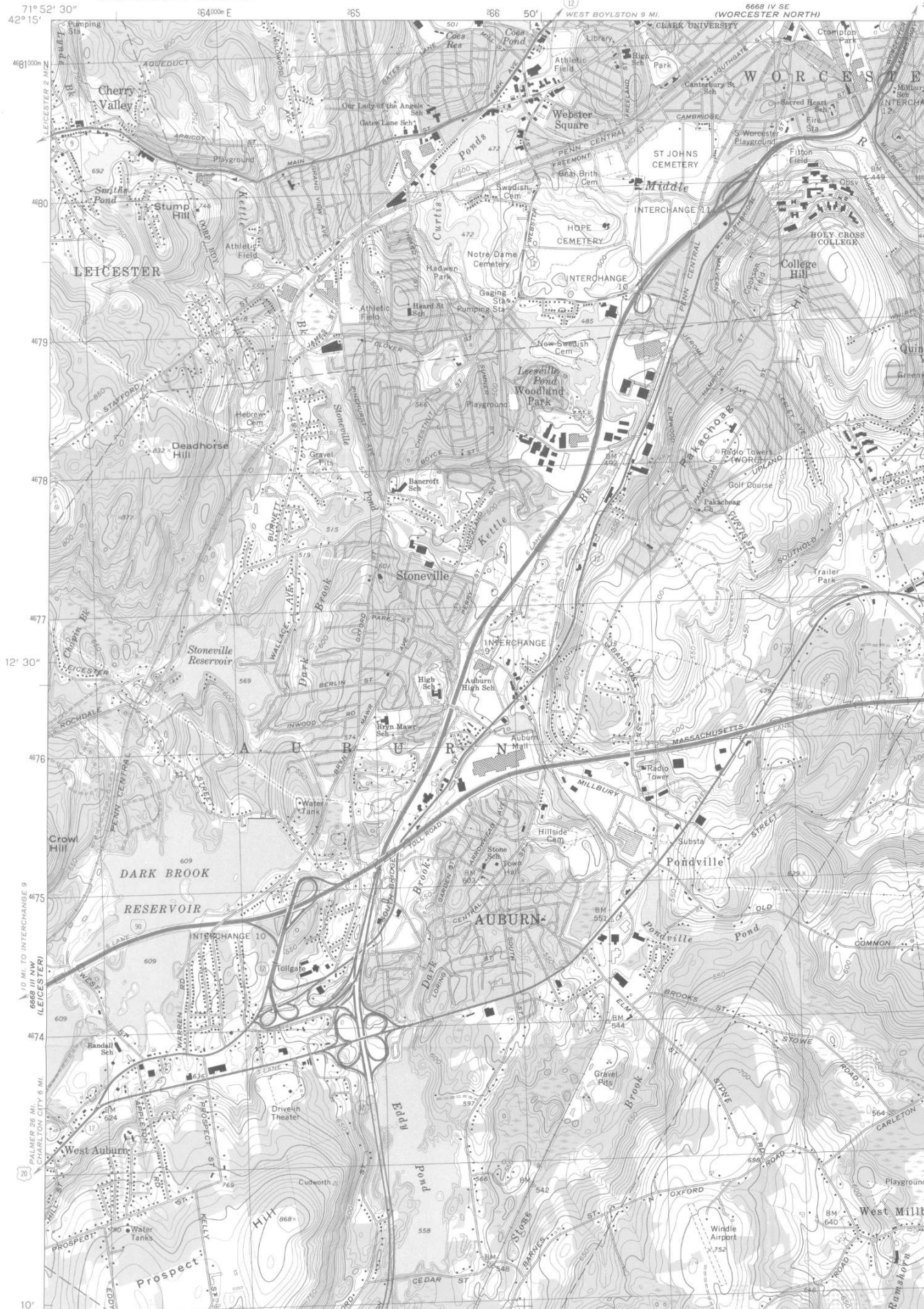
#29 Indian trough shaped mortar and pounding  
stones found in Indian campground 300yds.  
northwest of farmstead



6668 IV SE  
(WORCESTER NORTH)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

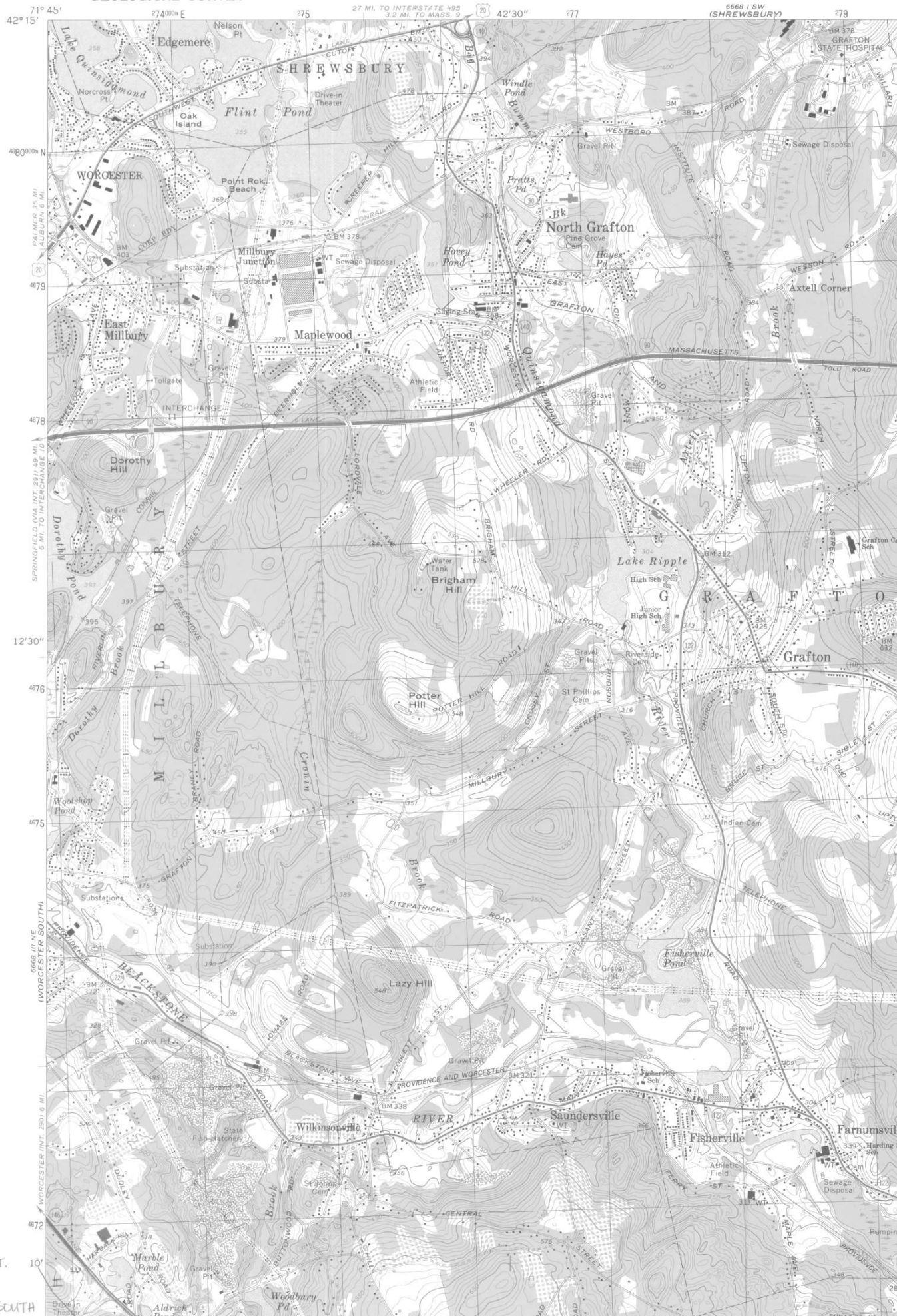






UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



MARBLE FARM HIST. DIST.  
80 BURBANK ROAD  
SUTTON, MASS.  
GRAFTON & WORCESTER SOUTH

A	19	273110	4671210 (Grafton)
B	19	272670	4670860 (Worc. S.)
C	19	272470	4671100 (Worc. S.)
D	19	272560	4671200 (Worc. S.)
E	19	272480	4671390 (Worc. S.)
F	19	272750	4671556 (Worc. S.) 420 000
G	19	272710	4671640 (Worc. S.) 450
H	19	272790	4671680 (Worc. S.) 450
I	19	272340	4671510 (Worc. S.)



UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH





COMPILED BY PHOTOGRAMMETRIC METHODS  
MOORE SURVEY & MAPPING CORP.  
CONTROL BY MASS GEODETIC SURVEY, U.S.C. & M.S. & M. CORP.  
REVISIONS BY  
CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATES, INC.  
LITTLETON, NH 03561

FREEGRACE MARBLE FARM  
80 BURBANK ROAD  
SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
SHEET 10  
LOTS #2, 47, 55

SCALE 1:2,400  
200 0 200 400 600 800 1000  
17/39 17/27 17/26 17/15

Revised To  
January 1, 1989

TOW  
MA  
AS  
CONTRACT # M.S. & M. 2



October 2, 1989

Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

OCT 1 1989  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination form:

FreeGrace Marble Farm Historic District, 80 Burbank Road, Sutton, (Worcester County), Massachusetts.

There has been no owner objections for the above mentioned property.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination form.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure:

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Valerie A. Talmage, *Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Officer*  
80 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116 (617) 727-8470  
Office of the Secretary of State, Michael J. Connolly, *Secretary*