

FORM B - BUILDING

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

In Area no.	Form no.
	17C-226

115



1. Town Northampton
 Address 12 North Maple Street
 Name Orcutt Hussey and Co.
 Present use commercial

Present owner Raymond Newell Jr.

3. Description:
 Date 1872
 Source History of Florence

Style _____

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric wide board

Outbuildings (describe) _____

Other features original "false front" sign

Altered _____ Date _____

Moved _____ Date _____

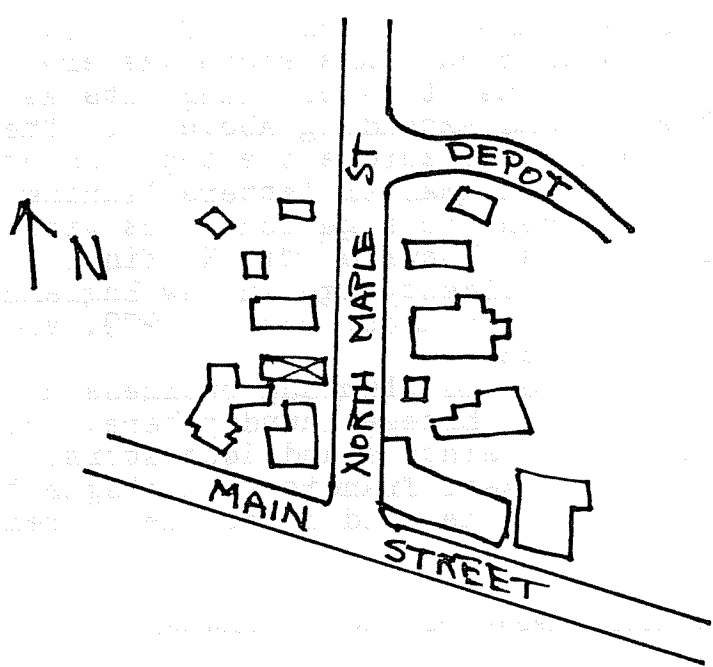
5. Lot size:
 One acre or less Over one acre _____
 Approximate frontage _____
 Approximate distance of building from street _____

6. Recorded by E. Lonergan

Organization NHC

Date January 1980

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



(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Orcutt Hussey and Co.

Original use commercial

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	<u>x</u>	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u>x</u>				

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

North Maple St. began to be developed as a commercial district of Florence in the late 1860's. In 1867 the Williamsburg line of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad opened, connecting the mill villages of Williamsburg and Northampton, including Florence, to the main north-south line in the center of Northampton. In Florence the tracks ran parallel to and just north of Main and North Main Sts., while a depot was established on North Maple St.

Thomas Orcutt started in the hardware business in 1870. Two years later Nathan Hussey became his partner and this store was erected. The original sign for this small, one-story building acts as a "false front", covering the front gable and extending above it. The sign reads "Orcutt, Hussey & Co." in a curve across the top. Underneath, it says "Hardware". Beneath that, in smaller letters leaning to the left, appears the word "Glass". Then the sign continues with three more lines: "Stoves, Ranges, Furnaces/ Tinware/ Tin Roofing, Plumbing, Etc." This is believed to be the oldest sign in New England attached to an existing business. It was only uncovered in 1979, and has been cleaned and sprayed with polyurethane.

The store continued in the hardware and plumbing business until the mid 1890's. For four years there was a Chinese laundry here, then, in 1897 George Churchill and George Busch, painters and decorators, settled in and stayed until 1937. In that year Francis La Montagne took over the business and ran it until 1976 when he sold it to the current owner, who continued the business.

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

- 1860 County Map.
- 1873, 1884 and 1895 Atlases.
- Springfield Sunday Republican, January 6, 1980 (section HF P. 1).
- History of Florence, ed. by Charles A. Sheffield, 1895, p. 246.