

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary

In Area no.	Form no.
	23A-55



Location Florence (Northampton)
 Address 31 Maple Street
 Name Samuel L. Hill House
 Present use Residence
 Present owner Robert Murray & Joan Premo
 Construction date: Circa 1860
 Reference 1873 Atlas of Northampton

Style Victorian Gothic

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric Bracketed

Outbuildings (describe) None

Other features Dormer windows, filigree
two chimneys, spires

Altered no Date _____

Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less x Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 135 feet

Approximate distance of building from street

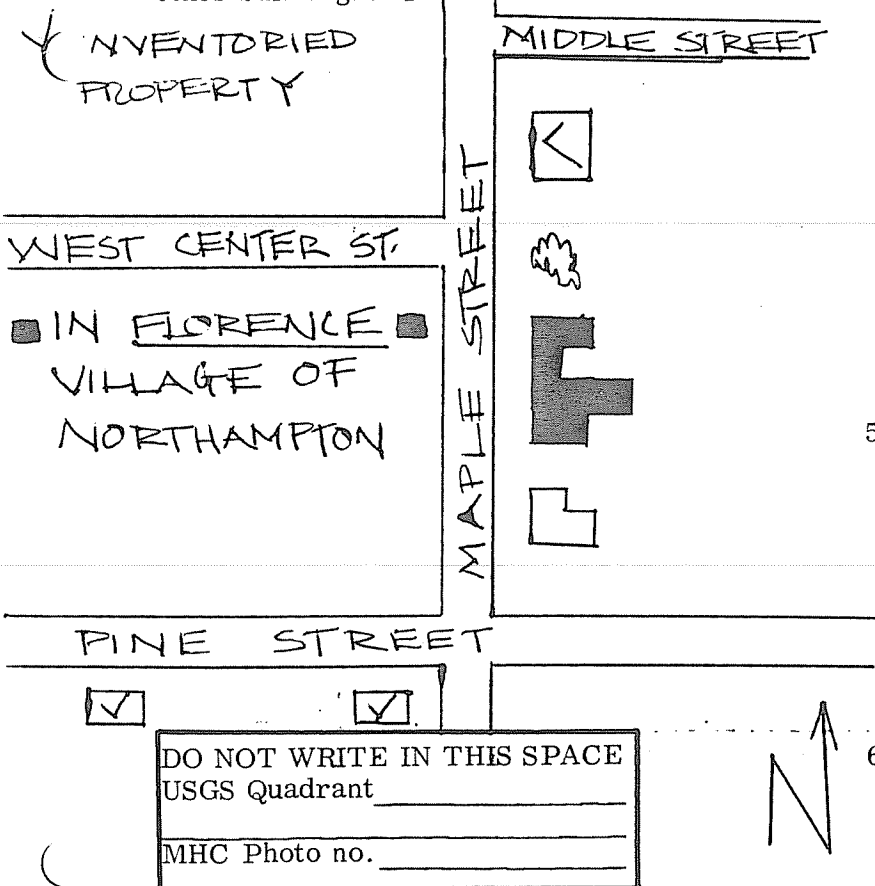
40 feet

6. Recorded by L. Komaromi

Organization Northampton Historical Commission

Date March 6, 1976

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



(over)

MAY 5 1976

MASS. HIST. COMM.

7. Original owner (if known) Samuel L. Hill

Original use 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	_____				

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

"On the list of the founders and upbuilders of Florence, the name of Samuel L. Hill must, by general consent, stand highest", so begins the preface to the biographical section of the History of Florence. S.L. Hill moved to Florence in 1841 at the age of 35, and remained here until his death in 1882. Originally from Rhode Island, and by trade a carpenter, he had moved c1830 to Willimantic, Conn. where he worked as an overseer in a cotton factory. He rose to superintendent and then to manager. It was in Willimantic that he "became prominent in church and village work and did much to encourage his associates and workmen to lead better and purer lives".

After moving to Florence, he helped organize the Northampton Association of Education and Industry (NAEI), also known as the Florence Community. The NAEI "was a co-operative colony emphasizing tolerance in religious attitudes and equitable economic and social relationships". This utopian experiment was similar to the more well-known Hopedale and Brook Farm. NAEI purchased the estate of the defunct Northampton Silk Co. in September of 1841. These 300 acres contained the water privilege and surrounding intervale that had supported a silk manufactory, which was powered through its dam and canal, 100 acres of mulberry trees, and a boarding house. The Community continued in the silk business and built another boarding house. S.L. Hill served as treasurer of the Community from its organization in April 1842 until its dissolution in November 1846.

At the demise of the Community, S.L. Hill and his brother-in-law

(Continued)

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

1854 & 1860 County Maps 1873, 1884 & 1895 Atlases
 Registry of Deeds: Bk.116-P.360, 114-377, 92-270
History of Florence, C. Sheffield, 1894, pp 205-11
 "A Chronicle of Industry on the Mill River", Smith College Studies in History, Vol. 21 Nos. 1-4

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET #1

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Northampton	Form No: 23A-55
Property Name: S.L. Hill House	

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

Edwin Eaton purchased most of the flat table-land that forms the center of Florence south of Main St. This land was sold off as lots to persons willing to establish homesteads. Park, Pine, Maple and West Center Sts. were settled in this manner. Hill also continued the silk business, which after some initial financial problems was incorporated as the Nonotuck Silk Co. in 1866. Samuel Hinckley, a wealthy resident of Northampton and Hill's financial backer, was president of the company and S.L. Hill served as manager and treasurer. The business steadily increased and new buildings were erected in Florence and Leeds in Northampton, and in the Haydenville section of Williamsburg. Their trade name was "Corticelli" and the company became known throughout the U.S. for "spool silk, machine twist, crochet, knitting, lace and filo silk, Persian and Roman floss, rope, embroidery and etching silk, buttonhole twist, etc.". Hill joined in with other local businessmen in organizing and investing in several other local industries. These include: Florence Manufacturing Co. (later known as Pro Brush), Florence Sewing Machine Co., Northampton Emery Wheel Co. and the Florence Furniture Co.

S.L. Hill continued his community involvement in the post-NAEI period in Florence. He continued the Community store, running it alone until 1850, when Isaac Parsons was brought in as a partner; financed the building of a new school house for the area; kept a station on the underground railroad; contributed greatly to the building of Cosmian Hall, Florence's main public building; and established, as well as endowed, the Florence Kindergarten (also known as the Hill Institute). The kindergarten, built in 1876, was one of the pioneer institutions of its kind in the county, and was probably the only endowed kindergarten in the country until Mrs. Leland Stanford endowed six kindergartens in San Francisco in 1891.

Arthur G. Hill, S.L. Hill's son, followed in his father's footsteps as one of Florence's leading citizens and lived at this address until the 1920's. A.G. Hill helped found the Florence Tack Co. in 1874, served as president of the Florence Furniture Co. in the 1890's, was co-founder of the Martin and Hill Cash Carrier Co., and served as Northampton's second mayor in 1887-88.

The S.L. Hill House was probably built in the early 1840's. Hill's "house on Maple St." is mentioned in an 1845 deed. Between 1869 and 1873 a northern extension to the main block was built. This two bay extension meshes very well with the earlier building, and the result is certainly the most imposing, picturesque residence of the 19th century in Florence.

Three wall gables, a single gabled dormer, and a double gabled dormer break up the line of the slate roof, while two interior, tall chimneys break the ridge line. The wall gables are filled by two-story, three-sided bays with flaring, conical caps, and pent roofs. Between the bays are entrance porticos with bracketed cornices. To the south is a 1½ story ell

(Continued)

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET #2

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Northampton	Form No: 23A-55
Property Name: S.L. Hill House	

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

with single gabled dormer, and one-story porch. A one-story porch with thin columns and friezework adorns the northern side.