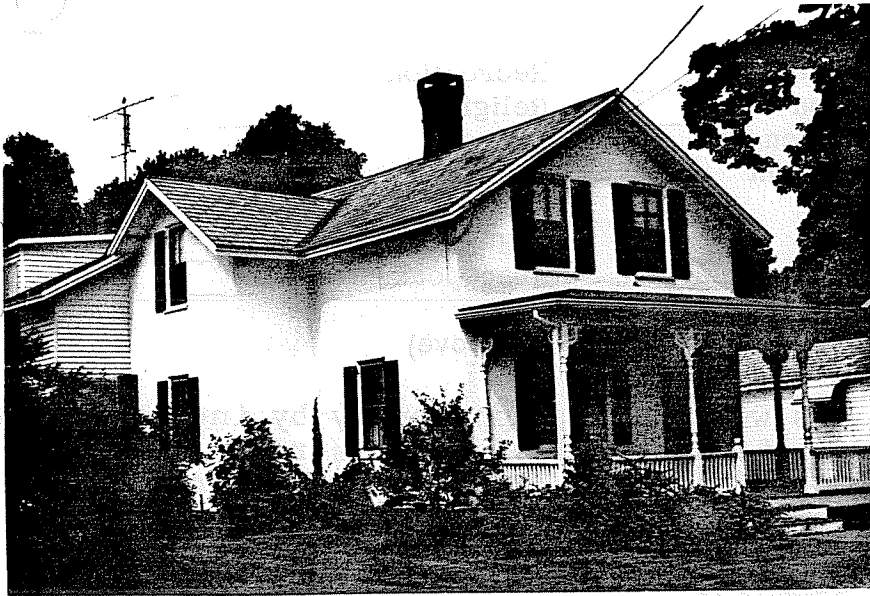


FORM B - BUILDING

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

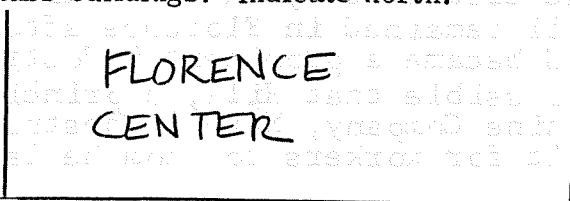
229

In Area no.	Form no. <b>23A</b> 269-271
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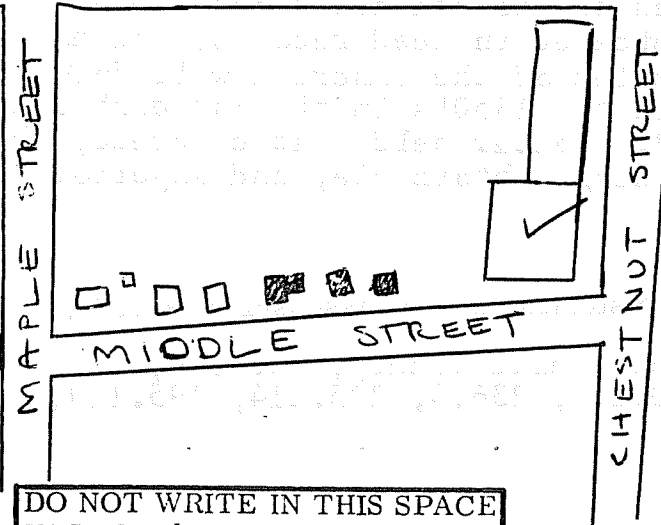


Northampton  
 Address 39, 45, & 49 Middle Street  
Concrete Houses  
 Present use Residential  
 Present owner 39-James & Hazel Brennan  
45-Howard & Rita O'Brien  
49-Senuta Bladas  
 Description:  
c. 1860  
 Source Registry of Deeds,  
195.119, 196.418  
Greek Revival Gothic

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



MAIN STREET (ROUTE 9)



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
 USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
 MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

Architect unknown  
concrete (?)  
 Exterior wall fabric stucco over stone  
 Outbuildings (describe) garage  
 Other features ridge roof with interior  
chimney; L-shaped plan; 2 stories;  
19th cen. porches and later  
 Altered additions additions  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:  
 Less than one acre x Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approximate frontage 75 feet  
 Approximate distance of building from street  
20 feet

6. Recorded by C. Dubie  
 Organization Northampton Historical  
Commission  
 Date JUN 1976

(over)

JUN 30 1976

MASS. HIST. COMM.

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

Original use Residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Residence

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Humanitarian	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____	Transportation	_____
Community development	_____				

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

Four concrete wall houses were built, apparently by industrialist Samuel Hill, on a new street laid out in 1860. The street, now Middle Street, was first called "Concrete House Street," for the unusual dwellings located there. Three of the four structures still exhibit their stucco-like surfaces; the fourth has been covered with clapboards or removed.

Samuel L. Hill was an overseer in a Willamantic, Connecticut cotton factory who came to Florence in 1842 as one of the original members of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. The Association or "Community" was one of the many utopian experiments undertaken in the 1840's, and drew chiefly on the anti-slavery and Transcendentalist elements. Hill remained in Florence after the dissolution of the Community and became a prominent industrialist, landowner, and humanitarian. It is possible that Hill, a principal investor in the Florence Sewing Machine Company, Main & Chestnut Streets, had the four dwellings built for workers to whom he later sold them.

The dwellings are simple in plan, with cleanly cut window openings, gently sloped ridge roofs, and Greek Revival style details at the entrances. Porches and wooden additions are present. If constructed of concrete as indicated in deed records, the houses are extremely significant as examples of the concrete wall form promoted by Orson Squire Fowler in the 1850's in his patternbooks and patterns for "octagon houses". Fowler held that concrete, or "the gravel wall" represented a cheap, obtainable, and superior building material.

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

Registry of Deeds, Hampshire County, 1067.80, 663.381, 554.243-245, 470.273, 390.201, 236.4, 225.214, 195.119, 196.418, 115. 74-79.