

WEST NEWBURY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Historic Sites Survey Table of Contents  
Farm Lane

Street Address	Page ##	Individual or Group Form	WN Historical Commission Comments
<a href="#">23 Farm Ln</a>	1-7	Individual	Chestnut Hill Farm was the home of author, muse, and activist Hazel Hammond Albertson. <a href="#">Click here to see her Minute History.</a>

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

R1-4

Haverhill

WNB.20

**Town/City:** West Newbury

**Place:**

## Photograph



Façade (south) elevation. View looking northwest.

**Address:** 23 Farm Lane

**Historic Name:** Romulus & Emily Jaques House; Chestnut Hill Farm

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Residence

Original: Single Family Residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1856

**Source:** Marriage date, visual

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Not determined

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite block

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards and trim

Roof: Asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Attached barn (mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> C)

**Major Alterations (with dates):** Rear ells (late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> C?); Attached barn (1991).

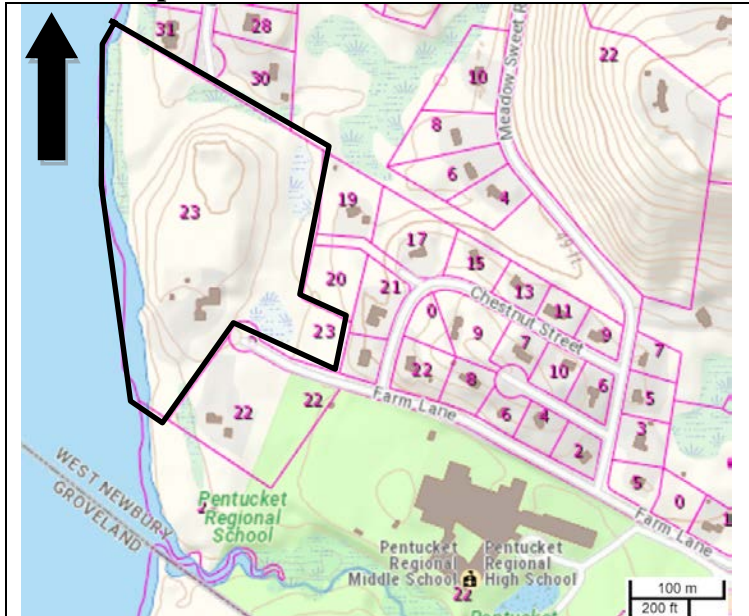
**Condition:** Excellent

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 18.51 acres

**Setting:** Located on a large lot adjacent to the Merrimack River, at the end of a short dead-end street extending from Main Street (route 113). Bordered inland by heterogeneous 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development and a regional high school complex.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero

**Organization:** West Newbury Historical Commission

**Date:** June 2020

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY

23 FARM LANE

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

WNB.20

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

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

23 Farm Lane is located at the western terminus of Farm Lane, on a large open lot that includes open fields on the east and north. The house faces south and stands on a slight rise overlooking the Merrimack River. A paved driveway extends from the cul-de-sac to the east side of the house and up to its attached garages and barn. The yard is maintained chiefly in lawn. The building consists of a 2 ½ story main block; a two-story, L-shaped rear ell; and a large attached barn.

Measuring 36 feet long by 32 feet deep, the large main block rises 2-½ stories from a low granite foundation to a side gable roof with gable returns and twin interior chimneys with corbelled tops. Walls are sheathed with clapboards and trimmed with wide corner boards and a high flat entablature. Windows typically have 6/6 double-hung sash with flat casings.

The symmetrical, five-bay façade has a center entrance that is not clearly visible from the street but appears to have a prominent Greek Revival door surround with sidelights and a high entablature. The asymmetrical right (east) elevation is partially obscured by shrubbery, a tree, and a lattice screen around its side entrance. A single-leaf door is centered in the first floor, with one window to its left and two to its right; the second floor appears to have two windows vertically aligned with windows below. Two windows are centered in the half-story.

The rear ells are a much lower two-stories in height, with clapboard siding, regularly spaced 6/6 windows, a low chimney on the left (west) slope of the north-south leg, and no gable returns. The east-west leg of the ell has an offset doorway at its west end and two garage doors on its east end. The attached front gable barn replaced an earlier structure in 1991.

Well preserved and well maintained, 23 Farm Lane is an extraordinary example of rural domestic architecture in West Newbury. The building is notable for its intact setting; position overlooking the Merrimack River; unusually large size; conservative five-bay, side gable form; intact volume, fenestration, and trim; and attached ells.

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

*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.*

23 Farm Lane was likely constructed circa 1856, the year in which Romulus Preston Jaques (1827-1913) married Emily Smith (ca. 1837-1896). They raised their family here and shared the house with his brother, Joseph Jaques (1824-1904), who did not marry. On the farm, Romulus Jaques began growing chestnut trees amid the peach trees on the property. The practice prompted the name by which it became known, Chestnut Hill Farm.<sup>1</sup> Romulus and Emily Jaques' son, Romulus Preston Jaques, Jr. (ca. 1867- 1909), married Nellie Pattinson in 1890 and took over operation of the farm. The Jaques family owned the farm and house until 1905.<sup>2</sup>

In 1909, Ralph and Hazel Albertson purchased the 65-acre property and house, five years after the couple married. Hazel Hammond Albertson (1883-1969), "matriarch of the Berkenbush family, was a most progressive woman for her time. In addition to supporting Chestnut Hill Farm with an avant-garde bed and breakfast for many years, she founded the West Newbury Women's Club and the first West Newbury Girl Scout troop in 1914, and she wrote and directed the pageant for the town's

<sup>1</sup> Ladd, *Contentious*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Essex South Deed Book 1779, p. 162.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY

23 FARM LANE

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

WNB.20

centennial celebration.”<sup>3</sup> The 1930 census indicates that Hazel Albertson was a “book author.” The Albertson household “was a lively, intellectually rigorous place where some of Boston’s most creative students were frequent guests.” Ralph Albertson “was a minister, social reformer, and Harvard librarian who was in the habit of inviting undergraduates from the area’s more prestigious colleges home on the weekends” to the farm.<sup>4</sup>

Hazel and Ralph Albertson’s daughter, Jean, and Jean’s husband, Kenneth Berkenbush, and their children also lived on the farm. Grandson Richard, known as Dick, became a West Newbury selectman for nine years, West Newbury fire chief for 37 years, and West Newbury police chief for 10 years, but is also known for an important contribution that many children will recognize; “Dickie” Berkenbush was the clever child who figured out how Virginia Lee Burton could end her book, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* in 1939 with Mary Anne, the steam shovel, becoming the steam boiler for the new town hall. Virginia Lee Burton was friends with Hazel Albertson and, during a visit to the farm, asked 12-year-old Dickie for his thoughts. The Berkenbush family still owns the property.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

- Anderson, Philander for Moses Pettingell. “Map of the Original Town of Newbury, now divided in Newbury, Newburyport, and West Newbury.” 1830.
- Beers, D.G. & Co. *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia: D.G. Beers and Co., 1872.
- City Directories. 1870, 1909, 1912, 1918, 1925, 1940, 1954-6. Ancestry.com.
- Essex South Registry of Deeds.
- Findagrave.com.
- Follansbee, Susan Poore and Jane Wallace Wild. *Images of America: West Newbury*. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.
- Ladd, Audrey, compiled and edited. “Contentious Citizens: A Compilation of Stories Telling the History of West Newbury, Massachusetts.” G.A.R. Library.
- Massachusetts Birth indices. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts Census. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts Death indices. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts Marriage indices. Ancestry.com.
- Sullivan, James. “As a child, his steam fueled hot 1939 children’s classic.” *Boston Globe*. March 30, 2006. North Shore section: pp. 1, 6.
- Town of West Newbury. “An Invoice and valuation of the rateable polls and estates, within the town of West Newbury, taken... 1851...and 1852.” West Newbury: Indian Hill Press. 1852. Library of Congress. Archive.org.
- United States Census. Ancestry.com.
- Walker, George H. & Co., *Atlas of Essex County*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co., 1884.
- Walling, Henry Francis. *A Topographical Map of Essex County, Massachusetts...* Smith & Worley, 1852.
- West Newbury Tax Assessor records.

<sup>3</sup> Follansbee and Wild, *Images*, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> James Sullivan, “As a child, his steam fueled hot 1939 children’s classic.” *Boston Globe*. March 30, 2006. North Shore section p. 1, p. 6.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY

**23 FARM LANE**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

WNB.20

**SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES**

Attached barn.



View from driveway looking west to Merrimack River.



**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY

**23 FARM LANE**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.20

**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ **only** in a historic district☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic districtCriteria: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☒ **C** ☐ **D**Criteria Considerations: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☐ **C** ☐ **D** ☐ **E** ☐ **F** ☐ **G**Statement of Significance by Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

23 Farm Lane is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C as an extraordinary example of rural domestic architecture in West Newbury during the Early Industrial Period (1830-1870). Two traditional floor plans remained popular during this period. One and one-half story, side-gabled houses in the vernacular Greek Revival style were popular during this time and were typically of frame construction. Houses in West Newbury were typically conservative in terms of form, i.e. frame construction, gable roof, two stories, yet builders were cognizant of design trends such as the addition of Greek Revival recessed entrances or corner pilasters. In West Newbury, these design trends took the form of features applied to conservative forms; in other localities, temple forms, for example, would have been more commonly used. Well-preserved and well-maintained, the building is notable for its intact setting; position overlooking the Merrimack River; unusually large size; conservative five-bay, side gable form; intact volume, fenestration, and trim; and attached ells. The property retains integrity of location, design, feeling, materials, setting, association, and workmanship. Information on the integrity of the interior would be needed in order to confirm this recommendation.