

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

019-0054	Salem		WNH.159 WNH.908
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Town/City: Wenham

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 14 Larch Row

Historic Name: Henry Alley, Sr. House

Uses: Present: Single Family Residence
Original: Single Family Residence

Date of Construction: before 1856

Source: style; 1856 map

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Not known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite and brick

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards and trim

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: garage, two sheds

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Rear addition (L 19th c), side addition (L 20th c)

Condition: Very good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.99 acre

Setting: Densely built streetscape with small-scale residential buildings at edge of village center. Located on main cross-town thoroughfare near Main Street (Route 1A).

Locus Map: Map numbers are last two digits of lot numbers.



Recorded by: Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Wenham Historical Commission

Date: June 2017

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

WENHAM

14 LARCH ROW

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.

14 Larch Row occupies a large trapezoidal parcel on the corner of Larch Row and Patch Avenue, a private way. The house is set close to the street at the east corner of the lot, which is maintained chiefly in lawn with foundation shrubs and scattered trees. A low hedge lines the sidewalk, while closely spaced mature trees define the southeast property boundary. A gravel drive bisects the lot, to the northwest of the house. The building consists of a 1½ story main block with a side ell and small rear addition.

Measuring 32 feet long by 26 feet wide, the five bay by two bay main block rises 1½ stories from a granite block foundation (brick at the side elevations) to a low-pitched, side gable roof with short gable returns and a square center chimney. Walls are sheathed in wood clapboards and trimmed with flat sill boards, corner boards, and fascia boards with a narrow crown molding. Windows typically have 6/6 double-hung sash with narrow molded casings and wood shutters.

The five bay façade (northeast elevation) has a center entrance with three granite steps, a single-leaf door, half-height sidelights, slender pilasters, high flat entablature with end blocks above the pilasters, and prominent cornice molding. The originally symmetrical northwest elevation contains two windows on each floor of the main block and a flush two-story addition at the back. The modest rear appendage has one bay facing the side of the lot, with a single leaf door below and a window above, and a one-story porch that also extends across part of the main block with a hip roof, turned posts, and wood railing.

The southeast elevation has one window extant on each floor of the main block, and a 22-foot square, two bay by two bay modern addition extending to the southeast. The addition rises 1½ stories from a concrete foundation to a side gable roof; its cladding, trim, and fenestration are similar to the main block.

Three early outbuildings are positioned near the main house: a small shed to the west and a small garage and shed to the south, near the southeast property line. Set nearly in the center of the parcel, the shed to the west of the house has a low-pitched gable roof, shiplap siding, a blank wall facing the street, and one window centered on its northwest elevation. A small, early garage set behind the southwest corner of the house has a low-pitched, front gable roof; one vehicle bay and vertical flushboarding on the façade (northeast elevation); a pedestrian door and clapboard siding on the northwest elevation; and a variety of utilitarian fenestration. A small shed behind the garage has a steeply pitched gable roof, wood shingle siding, and a door on its northwest gable end.

A cast metal plaque (1966) (WNH.908) affixed to the cut face of a granite boulder is located amid shrubbery at the base of the east elevation. The inscription reads

“To the Memory of Henry Alley
1835-1908
who at this location became the first commercial Queen Honeybee breeder
This Tablet is erected by grateful
Essex County Beekeepers”

Well preserved and well maintained, 14 Larch Row is a handsome example of vernacular Greek Revival design in Wenham. The cottage is notable for its conservative, five-bay center entrance form, robust enframing around the main entrance, and modest Victorian addition at the rear. The survival of early outbuildings is also notable.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

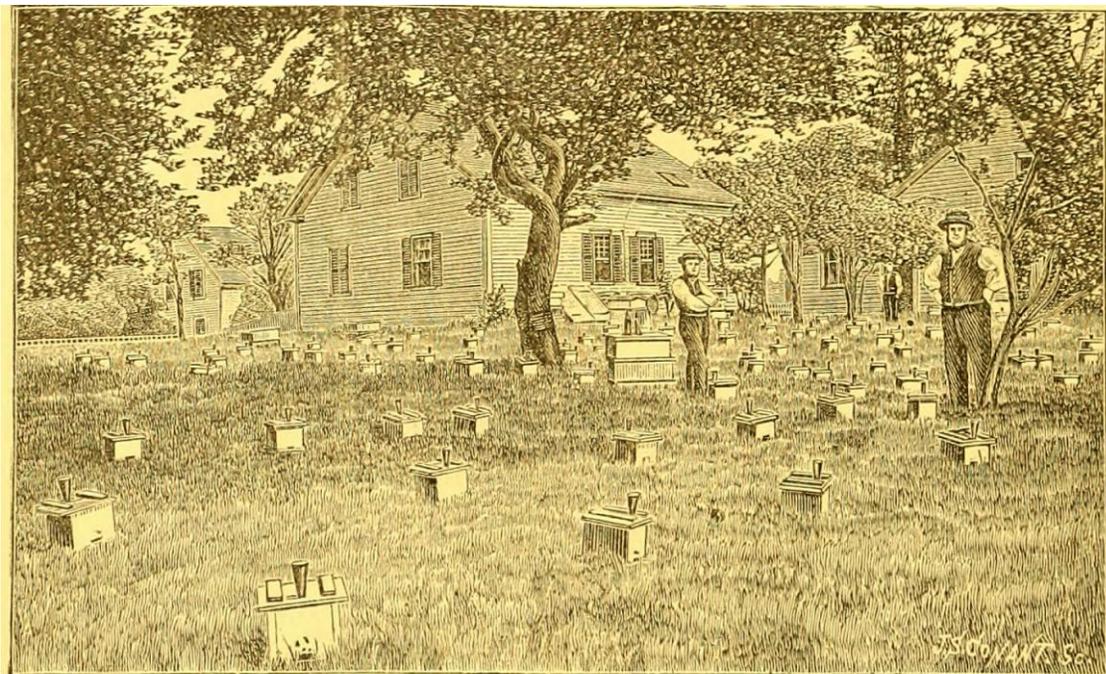
Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

14 Larch Row is significant for its associations with shoemaking, an important and widespread local industry, and for its unusual ties with the field of apiculture. The house at 14 Larch Row was constructed before 1856 and was noted on the 1856 Walling map as the home of J. Gould. The Henry Alley, Sr. (1835-1908) family, consisting of Henry, age 25, a shoemaker, wife Clarissa Porter Alley age 26, son Henry 2, and a newborn infant, appear in the 1860 census as living at 14 Larch Row with extended family: Isaac Porter age 36, a house carpenter, his wife Julia, age 32, Clarissa Porter age 61, and two small children. Clarissa Alley purchased the property from John J. Gould in 1873. (Essex South Deed Book 891, page 19) By 1870, the Alley and Porter families had separated their households, which made room for the four Alley children: Henry Junior, Annie, Addie, and Lizzie.

Although Henry Alley was employed as a shoemaker into the 1870s, his affinity lay with bee keeping as early as the age of 23 (circa 1858) when he acquired his first hive. By the mid-19th century, a market for young queen bees had developed. By 1861, Alley was one of just three beekeepers in the United States producing queens for sale. (U.S.D.A.: 5) In an 1871 city directory, Alley is listed under box manufacturers as a builder of bee hives. By 1880, Alley had established his Bay State Apiary and was able to note his employment as an apiarist on the federal census.

Alley eagerly shared his knowledge with apiarists worldwide. He was a regular contributor to "The American Apiculturist," a journal published by Alley's friend S.M. Locke in Salem, Massachusetts for ten years beginning in 1883. Volume 4 of the journal included an article describing the Alley farm:

"[Seen here is] only a portion of his home queen-breeding yard, with his home in the background, a few full colonies in Langstroth hives, and the nucleus hives with the cone-feeders adjusted. Mr. Alley may be seen in the foreground at the right, his son at the bee-house door... Most of the full colonies are out of range and could not be shown. Mr. Alley has several other mating yards away from home, and now has from two hundred to three hundred nuclei in operation." (pp: 74-75)



THE BAY STATE APIARY, WENHAM, MASS.

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Alley wrote extensively on apiculture. Alley's books on the subject include:

- *The beekeeper's handy book; or, Twenty-two years' experience in queen-rearing, containing the only scientific and practical method of rearing queen bees and the latest and best methods for the general management of the apiary.* By Henry Alley. (Wenham, Mass., published by the author, 1883 and 1885 editions).
- *Thirty years among the bees; the result of a quarter-century experience in rearing queen-bees, giving the practical, every-day work of the apiary.* (Salem, Mass., Printed for the author by the Salem press, 1893).
- *The national beekeepers' directory: containing a classified list of the beekeepers of the United States and Canada: with essays and hints regarding the successful management of the apiary.* (Salem, Mass.: Printed at Salem press publishing and printing co., 1889).
- *Improved queen-rearing or how to rear large, prolific, long-lived queen bees* (Beverly, Mass., Printed for the author by C. A. King, 1903).

Alley was also a prolific inventor. Among his inventions are: the Alley Drone Trap, the Alley Shipping Cage, the Alley Smoker, and the Bay State Bee Hive. A plaque honoring Alley's contributions was installed by the Essex County Beekeepers in front of the house in 1966. The inscription reads

"To the Memory of Henry Alley
1835-1908
who at this location became the first commercial Queen Honeybee breeder
This Tablet is erected by grateful
Essex County Beekeepers"

In addition to his contributions to apiculture, Alley was active in civic affairs. Alley served the town of Wenham as a constable (1874-1902), as a cattle inspector, and as a member of the Board of Health.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 2. Façade (east), entrance detail.



Photo 3. Plaque erected 1966. (WNH.908)



Photo 4. Shed.



Photo 5. Garage and shed.

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by Stacy Spies
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Henry Alley House, 14 Larch Row, retains integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association, and is individually eligible under Criterion B as the residence and workplace of Henry Alley, an innovator, farmer, author, and educator in the field of apiculture from the 1850s until his death in 1908. The building is significant to agriculture at the state level. The period of significance begins with the beginning of his apiculture career in 1858 and ends with his death in 1908.

14 Larch Row is also a contributing feature of the eligible Larch Row Historic District. The neighborhood along Patch Avenue and Larch Row near Main Street is eligible as a historic district under Criterion A at the local level. Developed during the 1840s and populated nearly entirely by cordwainers in the mid-19th century, this neighborhood is representative of the dramatic rise in the shoemaking trade in Wenham during the middle decades of the 19th century. This densely-developed neighborhood allowed residents access to workshops and small factories on nearby Main Street in addition to ten-footer shops located on site. The buildings feature Greek Revival stylistic features popular during that time. The buildings all retain integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association.