

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

D5/ 3/ 14/ /

Blue Hills

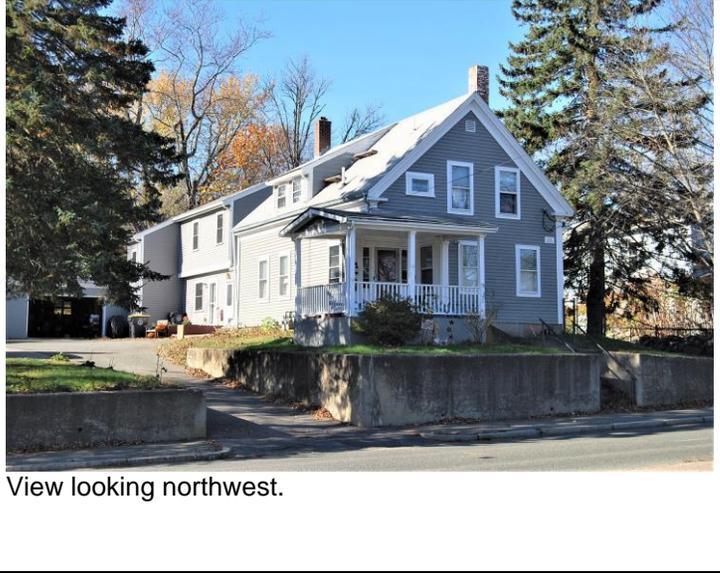
AVO.32

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

**Town/City:** Avon

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

## Photograph



View looking northwest.

**Address:** 179 East Main St.

**Historic Name:** Jonathan and Darius Littlefield House

**Uses:** Present: Multiple Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1835

**Source:** Deed

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Not Known

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboards / Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** None

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Rear ell expanded to two stories and large 2-story ell and garage added (2014); Replacement vinyl sash windows (late 20<sup>th</sup> C or early 21<sup>st</sup> C)

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 1.43

**Setting:** Located near a busy intersection along the four-lane, divided Route 28. Surrounding buildings are 2-story frame dwellings constructed during the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Harrison Boulevard connector to Highway 24 is located immediately southwest of the house.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies

**Organization:** Avon Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2022

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

179 EAST MAIN ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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.*

The house is oriented to the northeast, toward the street, with a shallow setback. The level lot is covered with lawn; mature trees fill the rear of the lot. A tall, poured concrete retaining wall lines the sidewalk. An asphalt-paved driveway and parking area are located along the house's southeast elevation.

The main block rests on a cut stone foundation and rises one story to a front-gabled roof with overhanging eaves. A slender brick chimney is located on the northwest roof slope near the ridge. A shed dormer containing two sash windows is located on the southeast roof slope. The main block is covered with wood clapboards and trimmed with wood gable-end returns, and corner boards. The façade is three bays wide with a recessed entrance located at the south edge of the façade. The Greek Revival surround consists of fluted wood pilasters with bullseye corner blocks and half-height sidelights. A metal-frame storm door protects the entry door. A small, offset porch with a shallow side-gabled roof is attached to the east corner of the house at the entrance. The porch is supported by square posts atop a concrete block base. Two sash windows and a small hopper window are located in the façade's gable peak. The main block is three bays deep. A one-story perpendicular ell, expanded to include a second story in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, contains a door and two bays of windows. A large 2-story gable-roof extends from the rear of the building and is attached to a garage located at the west corner of the house.

The house's volume and size are a common vernacular form used in Stoughton during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The position of the recessed entrance at the edge of the structure is present in other Greek Revival houses in Avon (there are a few on West High Street) but is uncommon elsewhere. The framing necessary to compensate for the omission of the corner post would be interesting to examine. Interior inspections were beyond the scope of this survey, but a closer examination of surviving framing, floorplans, and interior features and finishes by an architectural historian with expertise in early Massachusetts building technology could provide additional insights into a likely original construction date and on the physical evolution of the building over time.

## 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.*

179 East High Street was the residence of Joel Thayer (1784-1849)<sup>1</sup> and his family in the 1830s. At the time, the house was owned by James (1794-1886), Darius (1798-1888), and Isaac (1796-1835) Littlefield, members of the prominent Littlefield shoe manufacturing concern in East Stoughton.<sup>2</sup> The Littlefield land holdings on the east and west sides of East Main Street at Spring Street were extensive. Nathaniel Littlefield Sr. (1725-1800) and Nathaniel Littlefield, Jr. (1765-1833) purchased 58 acres of land here in the 1790s.<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Littlefield, Jr. purchased an additional 90 acres on the east side of East Main Street in 1808.<sup>4</sup> The real estate holdings included several houses as well as Darius' Littlefield's store. Divided highway Route 28 was constructed in 1930, which involved road widening and realignment. (The tall concrete retaining wall in front of the house likely dates from this time.) The intersection was further altered with the construction of Harrison Boulevard circa 1960. Examination of historic photographs from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the collection of the Avon Historical Commission, historic maps, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century construction plans make it clear that the intersection has been greatly altered from its historic appearance. As a result, it is difficult to discern which family member's house 179 East Main Street might have been. (It is also possible that the house was

<sup>1</sup> Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage Book, Vol. 161: 138.

<sup>2</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 106, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 31, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 31, p. 75.

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moved from its original location, out of the way of the construction, or that it was always used as a rental house or to house employees of the Littlefield shoe factory. More research is recommended.)

In 1835, James, Darius, and Isaac Littlefield sold "a small farm...containing about ten acres of land...with a dwelling house and barn... being the farm on which Joel Thayer now resides – on the lower road so called" to Howard Alger.<sup>5</sup> This property appears to be 179 East Main Street.

In 1851, Howard Alger sold the property to boot manufacturer Isaac Alden, who subdivided the farm into smaller building lots along the west side of East Main Street.<sup>6</sup> Shoe factory worker John Lynch (1843-1906) purchased the house in 1869 and lived here with his family until his death.<sup>7</sup> From 1939 until 2000, the house was owned by Bertha Berger and her husband, Hans, who worked as a moulder in an iron foundry.<sup>8</sup>

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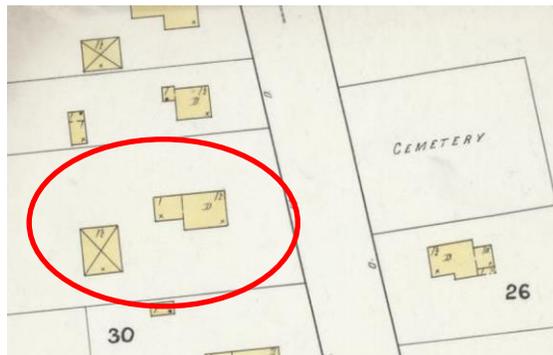
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House as depicted in 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas.

<sup>5</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 106, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 206, p. 330.

<sup>7</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 377, p. 410.

<sup>8</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 14384, p. 3.