

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	BUR.61
Historic Name:	Simonds, Dea. Jonathan House
Common Name:	
Address:	121 Lexington St
City/Town:	Burlington
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	46-13-0
Year Constructed:	c 1781
Architect(s):	Munroe, Ishmael
Architectural Style(s):	Federal; Greek Revival
Use(s):	Agricultural; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Stone, Uncut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

SEP A BUR.61

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

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
46-13-0	LEXING		61

Town Burlington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 121 Lexington Street

Historic Name Deacon Jonathan Simonds House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction ca. 1781

Source Dunham, Fogelberg, et al. (see Bibliography)

Style/Form Federal with Greek Revival roof and front door surround

Architect/Builder Greek Revival style work attributed to Ishmael Munroe, housewright

Exterior Material:

Foundation fieldstone

Wall/Trim wood shingles

Roof asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures None

Major Alterations (with dates)

additions to left and rear (dates unknown) ; rear-most addition appears to have originally been built as detached Barn.

Condition Good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage less than an acre

Setting fronts street on south side of Lexington Street near old Ishmael Monroe Residence [see 2 South Bedford Street].



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Recorded by John V. Goff

Organization Historic Preservation & Design, Salem, MA

Date (month / year) 6 / 1999

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BUILDING FORM**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION** *see continuation sheet*

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

The Deacon Jonathan Simonds House at 121 Lexington Street is one of Burlington's finest Federal Period and Federal Style residences. It is a large (36 feet wide x 28 feet deep) 2-1/2 story, pitched roofed 5 bay x 2 bay wood framed house. Early features include a fine late Georgian or Federal period pedimented front door surround, a Federal Style 6 paneled front door, an uneven A-B-A spacing in the five columns of window openings in the front, and the large central brick chimney.

The house also has 6/6 windows, projecting rake cornice overhangs, and cornice returns at the eaves level. 20th century additions include covered balconies for both the first and second floors on the left (east) end of the house, and a series of additions, including garage, on the rear.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

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.

The Deacon Jonathan Simonds house has traditionally been attributed to Jonathan Simonds, born in 1752. Simonds was a Woburn Second Parish Minuteman who marched to Lexington and Concord on April 15, 1775. He served as a member of Captain Joshua Walker's Militia Company, and both married and became a Church Deacon after the War. 1781 was the year of Deacon Jonathan Simonds's marriage to Phebe [Phoebe] Cummings, and is taken now to be the probable year of the house's construction. The elder Jonathan Simonds held many Town offices prior to passing away in 1827.

Jonathan and Phebe Cummings Simonds raised at least one child, son Jonathan Simonds, Jr. who was born in 1782. Jonathan Simonds, Junior married Betsy Munroe, daughter of housewright Ishmael Munroe who lived next door. (see **2 South Bedford Street**). As a consequence, Jonathan Simonds Jr. acquired Burlington housewright Ishmael Munroe as a father-in law during and after the 1820s. The statement by Burlington historian John Edward Fogelberg that the house was "supposed to have been built for [Jonathan Simonds] by Ishmael Munroe" likely indicates that the father-in law did remodelling work on the 1780s house sometime between the 1820s and 1840s. An exterior and preliminary visual comparison of 121 Lexington Street with Munroe's homestead at 2 South Bedford Street nearby suggests that the elder Munroe may have re-framed the roof, and/or been responsible for the projecting cornice returns on the house, which seem to have a Greek Revival Style aspect. The younger Jonathan Simonds was apparently "up" on Greek Revival Style fashion changes during this period, as he is also credited with having been one of the primary forces responsible for saving and radically updating the **Woburn Second Parish Meeting House** in 1846 (see also **12 Lexington Street**). The church remodelling job put the younger Simonds in contact with Burlington's "other" dominant housewright of the period, William Lawrence. (see also **3 Winona Street, 110 Winn Street**, etc.).

Many families occupied the house between the last of the Simondses, and Ivar Johnson, who purchased the place in 1936. As a consequence, the Simonds House became occupied by families named Chute, Buckminster, Gilligan, Millican, and the Winchester Brick (Company?) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

By the 1930s, the Colonial Revival movement had gained strong force across the United States, and many architects, contractors, and homeowners were both restoring historic American buildings throughout the country, and aggressively seeking out neglected rural farmhouses to improve and repair. The Johnsons who purchased the Simonds House in 1936 were credited with both adding an "ell at the rear to create an apartment for their daughter Rhoda" and with restoring other parts of the house. The crisp, and evenly corbelled central brick chimney was likely rebuilt in conjunction with these Depression Era Colonial Revival improvements.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town Burlington
Property: Deacon Jonathan Simonds House
Address 121 Lexington Street

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

Area(s) Form No.
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Historical Description (cont'd)

Neil J. MacNevin is said to have purchased the house in 1969, and remained the owner of record as of 1998. The Deacon Simonds House, as it currently survives, is both one of Burlington's finest 18th century residences, and an example of 20th century Colonial Revival restoration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

- Ashworth File #22
- Assessor's Records, Town of Burlington
- Dunham, Lotta Cavanaugh Rice. The History of Burlington 1640-1950 p. 74.
- Fogelberg, John Edward. article dated 1/27/1981 indexed as Ashworth article #84.
- Fogelberg, John Edward. Index to Proper Names... (II) re Ishmael Munroe... p. 69.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

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

Area(s) Form No.
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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 **Historic Preservation & Design**
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The House is significant by Criterion B (important persons) for its associations with 18th century Burlington Deacon Jonathan Simonds.

The House is significant by Criterion C (architectural style and/or construction) as one of Burlington's finest architectural landmarks, a large, rurally-sited Federal Style House with Greek Revival Style details attributed to Ishmael Munroe, reputed to have been a talented housewright.