

## Lyme Center Historic District.

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*Site:* N12-6. *Municipality:* Lyme, NH. *Location:* Lyme Center. *Site Type:* Historic District. *UTMs:* (Zone 18) A. 731345/4853400. B.731350/4853320. C. 731200/4853290. D. 731115/4853316. E. 731005/4853406. F. 731040/4853490. G. 731160/4853495. H. 731300/4853460.

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### *National Register Nomination Information:*

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

The Lyme Center Historic District is comprised of seventeen primary structures and numerous related outbuildings arranged in linear fashion along the Dorchester Road. Within the district several roads intersect Dorchester Road which is laid out in an east-west direction. East of the district is Acorn Hill Road which extends from the north side of Dorchester Road. At the center of the district Baker Hill Road joins Dorchester Road from the south. Serving as a major impetus for the construction of buildings in Lyme Center is Grant Brook which also marks the southern edge of the district and serves as the rear lot line for properties on the south side of Dorchester Road.

A profusion of black locust and sugar maple trees shade Lyme Center and help unify the district. Many have grown up since the Hurricane of 1938 destroyed the previous generations of vegetation. A secondary rural road, Dorchester Road is without sidewalks though overhead wires and utility poles dot the district.

Approximately half of the buildings in the district predate the Civil War. Stylistically, the Greek Revival Style predominates followed by a second period of substantial building activity and alterations in the late 19th-early 20th century as witnessed by the profusion of turned posts and decorative jigsaw woodwork seen in the district. Where construction has occurred in the twentieth century, largely replacing structures destroyed by fire, it is generally compatible in terms of massing and simplicity. All of the buildings in the district are of frame and clapboard construction, a few have been covered in synthetic siding. With the exception of the Baptist Church and Vestry, Academy and Lyme Country Store, the buildings in the district are residential in nature.

The modest and unrepitious quality of these structures tells us much about their occupants, merchants and workers who found a ready source of employment in the mills and small industries powered by Grant Brook as it meanders through Lyme Center. Although the structures contained in the district have evolved over the years and lack a museum quality all remain fine examples of their respective styles and periods.

Descriptions begin at the northwest corner of the district proceeding eastward along Dorchester Road and then westward along the south side of the road. Of the twenty-seven total buildings in the district twenty contribute to the significance of the district.

1. House, (37 Dorchester Road), before 1826, Contributing.

A simple 12 story clapboarded Cape with characteristic five bay facade and central entrance. Above the concrete steps, the four-panel door is capped by a four light transom with simple surround. The house rests on a foundation of stone blocks with concrete block infill. Window openings on the facade contain 2/2 doublehung sash (not original) with exterior metal storms and modern blinds. A 12/8 window, indicative of the original configuration, survives on the east side. A boxed cornice with cyma recta, ovolo and cavetto moldings under the projecting eaves decorates the facade. Side elevation eaves are close and without returns. At the rear a single story ell continues the line of the east wall. The ell is set on a mortared stone foundation with 1/1 windows. An offcenter concrete block chimney punctuates the asphalt gable roof of the main house with a brick chimney centered on the ell ridge. Research by local historian, Dorothy Sears, indicates that William B. Clark sold this property with a house in 1826.

1A. Outbuilding, c. 1970, Non-Contributing. North of the house and visually joined by a picket fence border is a single story clapboarded garage/shed set with the ridge line of its gable roof parallel to the ell. The single garage door opens onto the east, doors on the south and east provide access to the storage space within.

2. Beal-Pike House, (41 Dorchester Road), 1857, Contributing.

A 1-1/2 story high pitch, gable fronted, clapboarded structure set above a high granite block foundation and enhanced by Greek Revival detailing. The facade measures four bays wide with the third bay occupied by a recessed entrance with eight-panel door flanked by covered partial sidelights. Fluted pilaster strips support an entablature lintel with plain frieze over the door. Two granite steps with bootscrapers front the entrance. Windows on the building contain 6/6 doublehung sash with a simple surround and exterior storms. Located on the east side is an offcenter entrance with a wooden door consisting of a horizontal panel between the two pairs of vertically oriented panels. Three transom lights cap the door. Two individual 6/6 windows are located south of the door with a joined pair of 2/1 windows on the other side. Plain cornerboards outline the structure, supporting a simple cornice with plain frieze with cavetto and cyma reversa moldings under projecting eaves on the side elevations. The cornice returns on the facade with close eaves on the rear elevation. An offcenter ridge brick chimney and gable dormer on the west slope punctuate the corrugated metal roof. Owing to the raised site, the foundation on the west side is two granite blocks high. Extending behind the main house is a 1-1/2 story wing resting on a concrete block foundation. The east side is spanned by a shed porch supported by turned posts above a concrete deck. Located on this side is a glazed and panelled door capped by a plain entablature, a 6/6 window, a fixed 3 x 2 light window and a vertical plank door capped by a four light transom. Black locusts shade the west side and front of the house.

2A. Garage, c. 1970, Non-Contributing. Angled northeast of the house is a two car garage constructed of wide clapboards with a low gable roof faced in T111 siding.

An earlier house constructed in 1829 preceded the current structure on the site. It apparently burned in 1856 and this house was constructed in 1857 by Col. Selah Beal (1)

who taught school for many years in the Beal-Jewell District in the Quintown Road vicinity. Later owners include John Claflin and C. H. Dimick (1903-1931).(2)

3. House, (43 Dorchester Road), 1826, Contributing.

A simple 1-1/2 story clapboarded Cape measuring five bays wide, set back from the street by an open lawn. The building rests on a brick and concrete foundation. Above a granite stoop the central entrance contains a panelled wooden door with upper window, covered by an aluminum storm door and with simple surround. Windows on the facade are unevenly spaced but symmetrically arranged in pairs and contain 2/2 doublehung sash (not original) with plain trim. The gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles with a plain boxed cornice that returns on the gable ends. Centered on the rear elevation is a 1-1/2 story ell, clapboarded, except for the north wall which is covered in wood shingles with close eaves. There are three doors on the ell, one is a four-panel door, the others have vertical boards. Surviving on the west side are several 9/6 doublehung windows to which modern sliding glass doors have been added. A stone wall marks the western boundary of the property.

Information on the history of this house is sketchy. It was apparently built by Zadok Howard.(3) Howard was a local carpenter who may have also been responsible for 37 Dorchester Road (#4). According to Dorothy Sears, Howard apparently bought the house in 1847 and resold it to the previous owner, Hannah Holt in 1848. Howard was listed as the owner in 1870. (4)

4. Sanborn-Wetherell House, (45 Dorchester Road), 1910-1912, Contributing.

This unusual gambrel roofed complex consists of a 1-1/2 story clapboarded gambrel house connected to a gambrel barn by a gambrel wing. The house, measuring 3 x 5 bays, rests on a concrete foundation with its entryless end facing the street. A two bay open shed porch supported by turned posts spans the five bay facade above a cobblestone foundation. The central entrance contains a panelled front door with square window, capped by an entablature lintel. The location of the entrance is highlighted by a central shed wall dormer which pierces the gambrel roof above it. Windows on the house are 2/1 doublehung with shelf lintels. A shed porch and shed project from the west side of the house. The porch, supported by turned posts feature brackets with turned elements and a stickwork frieze of 3x"s. Plain cornerboards, a simple frieze and projecting eaves which return, outline the building. Two interior brick chimneys are located on the gambrel ridge.

4A. Barn, 1910, Contributing. A single story gambrel roofed wing unites the house with the attached barn. Projecting from the center of the gambrel-fronted barn, which is set perpendicular to the house is a square clapboarded ventilator with a louvered square opening on each side, capped by a lipped lintel. The ventilator is capped by a low pyramidal roof with projecting eaves. A large set of vertical board sliding doors provides access on the east side. Wooden numerals reading "1910" are located at the peak of the roof. The barn rests on a mortared fieldstone foundation.

This house replaces an earlier structure destroyed by fire in 1910 which was rebuilt during the same year by Charles Sanborn, co-owner of the Sanborn Mill (see #15).(5)

5. Lyme Center Baptist Church, (47 Dorchester Road), 1830, Contributing.

Setback from the Dorchester Road and fronted by a circular drive, the Baptist Church is a simple single story frame and clapboarded structure. The building sits on brick foundation, capped by a beveled wooden water table. Its wide gable front, set off by two cedars, is three bays wide with two entrances marking the outermost bays. Each six-panel door is flanked by recessed panel pilasters and corner blocks and capped by a semicircular arch filled with clapboarding above which is a central keystone. A granite step fronts each door. Between the two entrances is a 1/1 double hung window capped by a similar clapboarded arch. The sashes are glazed with red, pink, yellow and peach colored glass and consist of a large square pane surrounded by a border of small square corner pieces joined by long rectangular panes. The same Queen Anne style window form configuration is seen in each of the four bays on the side elevations and at the rear of the building. Above each entrance is a 2/2 double hung window, a border of smaller colored glass pieces surrounds each of the four rectangular panes. The center window on the second floor, wider than the others is actually a 2/2 window of the same design, flanked by latticework sidelights and capped by a semi-elliptical clapboarded arch and surround. A smaller semi-elliptical louvered fan is located in the attic, capped by a keystone. All semi-circular and elliptical ornament over the windows and doors is painted dark green. Simple corner boards support the cornice returns formed by the projecting eaves of the facade. The rear elevation is three bays wide with two windows, like those seen on the side elevations, flanking a blind arched window.. Above the 12/12 window lighting the attic, the eaves do not project. Inset from the front of the gable roof is a two-stage tower with steeple. The square clapboarded base contains a circular clock on its front face. A projecting cornice adorned by small brackets acts as a base for the turned balustrade of the second stage, which surrounds an octagonal drum constructed of flush board siding. Each of the eight faces features an arched molding, a rectangular louvered panel is located on alternate faces. Capping the drum is an octagonal spire and arrow weathervane.

Organized in 1810, the meetinghouse serving the Baptist Society prior to this structure was located about three-fourths of a mile east of Lyme Center. The construction of the present structure dates to 1830 and was the charge of a building committee consisting of Isaac Perkins, Seryl Bixby and Wallace Amsden. The belfry was added in 1858 by William Thomas, although the bell cast by a firm in West Medway, Massachusetts (perhaps the Holbrook Company) was not installed until 1867. The Queen Anne Style window panes of rolled colored glass clearly date to the late 19th century. Extensive repairs to the belfry were made in 1929 and interior redecoration dates to 1956-7. In 1964, the chimes and clock were given in memory of Isaac Freeman Balch by his daughter, Ella Balch Tar.(6)

6. Lyme Center Baptist Church Vestry, (47 Dorchester Road), 1895, Contributing.

Located east of the Baptist Church, the vestry is a 1-1/2 story frame and clapboarded structure with its ridgeline set perpendicular to that of the church. Set on a concrete

foundation, the structure measures three bays wide and four deep with a standing seam metal roof. Centered on the (west) gable front is a wide wooden door displaying two rows of three vertical panels. The entrance is capped by a plain entablature with globe light suspended above. A concrete step with wrought iron railings fronts the door. The windows on each side of the door, like those elsewhere in the building are elongated 2/2 double hung windows with lipped lintels. A smaller 2/2 double hung window lights the attic. Ornament on this simple structure is limited to wide corner boards, projecting eaves and cornice returns. A shed addition spans the rear with a single story ell extends from the rear of the east side

A vestry was constructed in 1895 with volunteer labor including that of Rev. J. M. Tozier (a carpenter by trade) and Walter Piper. In 1918, Rev. Frank Perkins, also a carpenter, built the addition, housing a small stage, kitchen and woodshed, for the sum of one hundred dollars, half of which was paid by the Ladies Aid Society. Renovations to the vestry interior during 1974 and 1975 included lowering the ceiling, paneling the walls and electrical rewiring.(7)

7. Former Baptist Church Parsonage, (49 Dorchester Road, 1912, Contributing.

A two story frame and clapboard house, nearly square in plan, resting on a concrete foundation and capped by an asphalt shingled hip roof. The division of bays on the structure is irregular, windows are 2/1 doublehung with shelf lintels and metal storms. Fronting the facade is a three bay, single story hip roofed porch supported by turned posts with brackets including a spool-like element and bulls-eye ornament. Above a wooden deck with latticed airspace, a double tiered railing with squat balusters spans the posts. The off center entrance is marked by a low gable rising from the front of the porch roof. The doorway occupies the third of four bays underneath the porch roof and contains a horizontally paneled door with square window, and is capped by a shelf lintel. The second story of the facade contains three windows above which a low pitched recessed pediment punctuates the center of the hip roof. Beneath the molded projecting boxed cornice is a simple frieze, corner boards and wide baseboard. A three sided bay window constructed of vertical boards projects from the west elevation.

7A Carriage Barn, c. 1912, Contributing. A narrow, single story gable roofed connector joins the main house and a single story hip roofed, clapboarded carriage house at the rear, which has its sliding door opening on the east side and a doublehung 9/1 window on the west. A post and rail fence flanks the driveway at the east. Three large black locusts and a sugar maple shade the property. Formerly the Baptist Church Parsonage, this building was constructed in 1912 to replace a previous single story parsonage. (The old parsonage was moved in 1911 to the site of the former Cook Hotel and remained a dwelling until it was demolished to make room for the Dimick House (#13) in 1924). This structure was constructed largely with voluntary labor. The cutting and sawing of lumber was donated by Charles and Newton Sanborn. The building served as a parsonage until about 1939 and was then rented until it was sold in 1973.(8)

8. Lyme Center Store, (51 Dorchester Road), 1876, Contributing.

A 1-1/2 story gable fronted frame and clapboard structure resting on a mortared

fieldstone foundation. Spanning the facade is a shed porch supported by four chamfered posts on bases above a wooden deck. Concrete steps and a low fieldstone wall are located in front of the building. Underneath the porch roof, a doorway marks each end of the facade, between them is a bulletin board with two high 3-light x 2-light windows above the board. As evidenced in historic photographs, this arrangement replaces the original central entrance flanked by two large store windows. Two doublehung 6/6 windows with shelf lintels and blinds by two large store windows light the attic, framed by projecting eaves and a simple frieze which curves as it meets the top of the corner boards. A shed dormer punctuates both the front of the east asphalt roof slope and the center of the west. A simple door hood marks the rear of the west side. Extending from the rear of the east side is a single story clapboarded ell with two sets of vertical board double doors on its facade. The east end and rear elevation are covered in shingles and a shed projects from the rear. Windows on the ell are fixed, containing 4 x 3 lights.

This building was preceded on the site by a store operated by M. K. Webster and for a short time by the Warren Brothers. It was destroyed by fire in 1876(9) and rebuilt the same year by the Warren Brothers.(10) Later shop owners include J. E. Andrews. Today it houses the Lyme Center Post Office and the Everett B Rich Insurance Agency.

8A. Garage, 1976, Non-Contributing. East of the post office is a modern single-car garage constructed of unpainted board and batten siding above a concrete block foundation and rising to an asphalt covered gable roof.

#### 9. Lyme Center Academy, (53 Dorchester Road), 1839, Contributing.

A two story frame and clapboard structure set on a low hill, screened by trees on its western edge with open fields to the east. The gable fronted building rests on a foundation of granite blocks. Its roof is covered in sheet metal. Originally three bays wide and four bays deep, the fenestration of the first floor of the building has been altered and replaced by 2/2 sash over the years while the second story retains its original bay configuration and 6/6 sash. On the facade, the off center entrance contains a modern multilight wooden door and is fronted by wooden steps. A joined pair of 2/2 windows is located to the left of the door while a single 2/2 window, a pair and a small pediment extension on a concrete foundation are located to the right of the entrance. Three doublehung 6/6 windows light the upper story. All of the windows mullions on the building are painted black. Centered in the attic is a semi-elliptical piece of plywood replacing an earlier window, above which a windowless square tower base breaks through the top of the gable front. The belfry has been removed. Simple baseboards, corner boards and cornice returns outline the building.

Extending along most of the east elevation is a single story shed on a dry fieldstone foundation with a standing seam metal roof. Centered on the west side is a late 19th century gable door hood supported by open slotted porch posts with pointed inserts and curvilinear brackets with cutout circles. Flanking the glazed and paneled double doors are two sets of four continuous 2/2 windows. Four evenly spaced but asymmetrical window openings are located above. As on the east side, there are no window openings near the

front of the building. On the rear elevation, the eaves cling closely to the wall. In addition to a rear exit there are four 2/2 windows on the first floor (one set of three) and 6/6 above.

The Lyme Center Academy was constructed in 1839, financed by a private corporation formed in 1836. After about fifteen years, the building was transferred to Lyme School District #12 and it was used as a public school until 1885 when districts were abolished. At that time, it was reverted to the Academy Corporation. In 1909, the first floor was made into two rooms. Lighting and heating improvements were made in 1931 and in 1936 electric lights were added. Running water dates to 1939. In 1953, the Lyme School District purchased the building from the heirs of the Academy and it was transferred to the town in 1962.(11) Today the first floor is used as a kindergarten and first grade.

10. Dimick House, (55 Dorchester Road), 1924, Contributing.

An apparently unique local example of the houses available in the early 20th century from mail order catalogues such as Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward. Known as Sears' "Concord" model, the Dimick House is a two story frame and clapboarded structure resting on a concrete foundation. At the center of this asymmetrical house is a two story block with a steeply pitched truncated hip roof from which explode a cross gable on the west side of the facade and off center gable wall dormers on the east and west elevations and east side of the facade. An open hip roofed porch spans the facade supported by three chamfered posts with spoke-like brackets and spanned by a plain stick balustrade above a wooden deck with latticework underneath. Beneath the porch roof, the wall surface undulates relating to the cross gable and the existence of a three sided bay window and angled bay window. The off center entrance contains a paneled door with large square upper glass. Windows on the structure are irregularly spaced with 2/1 doublehung sash and plain surrounds. A plain frieze and corner boards outline the wall surfaces beneath projecting eaves.

Extending behind the main house is a 1-1/2 story wing with similar frieze and corner board detailing. An open shed roofed porch projects from the east side of the house with a porch post like that seen in front. The house is encircled by a ring of about a dozen black locust trees.

This house was preceded on the site by the Holt Hotel (also Cook Hotel), used as a hotel and boarding house for the steam mill help who worked across the street. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1905.(12) The present house was ordered from Sears catalog in 1924 at a cost of \$2,473 and assembled by Edwin P. Dimick.(13) Mail order houses were available from Sears from about 1908 to 1937. The custom sawing of rough lumber for this house was one of the last jobs done at the Sanborn Mill (see #15). (14)

10A. Barn, c. 1924, Contributing. Located northeast of the house above a low fieldstone foundation is a barn board shed with an asphalt gable roof. A sliding door opening is located on the board (street) side, windows are fixed with 4-lights x 3-lights.

11. Blake-Gaylord House, (54 Dorchester Road), 1841, Contributing.

A 2-1/2 story 3 x 4 bay frame and clapboard structure resting on a brick foundation and

set gable end facing the street with a side hall entrance. An open single story hip roofed porch with metal roof wraps around the facade and west elevation. This late 19th century porch is supported by plain posts with a bracket to each side. Above each bracket the wooden frieze features a decorative pattern of cutout circles and arrow details. A simple stick balustrade spans the posts above a wooden deck; vertical wooden boards cover the airspace below. The off center entrance consists of a six panel door flanked by half sidelights and capped by an entablature lintel. All windows on the structure contain 2/2 doublehung sash with lipped lintels, aluminum storm windows and blinds. The projecting boxed cornice is supported by plain corner boards, with returns on the facade and close eaves on the rear elevation. A single off center brick chimney projects from the asphalt roof. A single story shed-roofed rectangular bay extends from the east side above a concrete foundation.

Extending behind is a two story gabled wing which steps down owing to the slope of the lot, thus appearing to be a single story from the road. It is set on a concrete faced foundation with a two story shed spanning the rear and a screened porch on the west side. Both 6/6 and 2/2 windows are evident.

11A. Barn, (19th century), Contributing. Offset to the southwest a single story flat roofed connector building spans from the rear of the wing to a large gable fronted barn. The connector building is constructed of vertical plank siding above a mortared fieldstone foundation and is capped by a corrugated metal roof. The clapboarded barn is also resting on a fieldstone foundation with a sliding square door with vertical boards painted red and white with a smaller hayloft sliding door above and 6/6 window in the attic and flanking the door. Two circular windows (18" diameter) light the rear elevation.

Constructed in 1841 for Royal Blake, the house was occupied by Alfred and Lydia Dimick between 1854 and 1874; by David Cutting 1874-1899; and also by Newton Sanborn, owner of the Sanborn Mill (see #15) from 1903-1947. Gladys Gaylord owned the property from 1947 until 1985.(15)

12. Rich House, (Southeast corner of Dorchester Road and Baker Hill Road), c. 1945, Non-Contributing.

A 1-1/2 story frame and clapboard Cape style structure resting on a concrete foundation. The central entrance is flanked by a large picture window and wide doublehung 8/8 window (the form that predominates on the building). Two gable dormers punctuate the asphalt gable roof. A connected gable front garage and mudroom are located to the east. Due to its recent date of construction, this structure is considered non-contributing to the historic district.

This property was previously the location of at least three steam sawmills manufacturing chair stock. The original mill was set over Grant Brook and its stone foundation is still evident on the south side of the brook just above the bridge. The southeast corner of Dorchester and Baker Hill Roads served as the mill yard, piled high with logs. Others were stored across the brook in the field to be rolled into the mill pond. A saw, grist and cider mill were established here by G. W. Sanborn and Son in 1876 on the site of the

former steam mill.(16) The house presently on the site was built by Roger Rich for his own use.(17)

13. Webster-Ward House, (Southwest corner of Dorchester and Baker Hill Roads, 50 Dorchester Road), 1837, Contributing.

A 1-1/2 story frame and clapboard structure with a broad gable front partially obscured by pine trees. The off center entrance contains a slightly recessed eight panel door fronted by a granite step. Narrow panels separate the door from the half sidelights which display a grid of mullions. Recessed panel pilasters support a simple entablature with the date "1840" in the frieze. A picture window is located to the left of the entrance, a doublehung 6/6 window with exterior 2/2 storm windows is located to the right. Two picture windows and a shed dormer light the east elevation. The picture windows were added about twenty years ago, replacing a "Victorian<sup>2</sup> style bay window. A single story wing, housing a garage at the rear and a noteworthy 12/8 window in the attic, extends behind. A projecting pediment porch with stick frieze and simple balusters is located on the south side of the wing. A modern (1976) shed roofed addition projects westward from the wing, with continuous windows on the north and a screened in porch on the south.

The house was constructed c. 1837-40 for Moses K. Webster, who operated a store which burned in 1876 on the site of the present Lyme Center Post Office.(18) An illustration of this house appears on the 1855 map of Lyme published by E. M. Woodford. With the exception of window alterations and the loss of a white picket fence, the house appears much as it does today.(19)

14. Blanding House, (46 Dorchester Road), c. 1880, Contributing.

A 1-1/2 story frame and clapboard structure with a single story flat roofed porch spanning the two bay wide gable front. Above the wooden deck and latticed airspace, turned posts with stick balusters support the porch. The off center entrance contains a four-panel door with upper panels of glass, fronted by a wooden late 19th century screen door. Alongside the entrance is a three sided bay window. On the second floor of the facade are two doublehung 2/2 windows with plain surrounds and blinds. Plain corner boards and deep returns outline the facade. A steeply pitched gable wall dormer marks the end of each side elevation. A single off center stove chimney projects from the asphalt roof. Located on the west side of the house is a three-sided bay window. In contrast to the main house's stone block foundation, it rests on a concrete base, indicating it to be a later addition. At the rear of the main house is a 1-1/2 story wing with single story open porch projecting on the west side.

14A. Barn, (19th century), Contributing.

Offset to the southwest is an attached broadsided red clapboarded barn resting on a dry fieldstone foundation. It features two front double doors and a 6/6 window capped by a peaked lintel. An off center square ventilator punctuates the gable roof, shingled in two colors of asphalt. The ventilator is constructed of flush board siding with a louvered panel on each side capped by a peaked lintel. The low pyramidal roof is topped by a horse weathervane.

This property lot was bought by Henry Blanding about 1879, after the first house on the site burned. Blanding built a blacksmith shop and house here, and the property was sold to Bry Marshall only four years later. Owned by the Webb family from 1924-1971. The blacksmith shop was torn down in the mid-1960s. (20)

15. Cutting-Gray House, (40 Dorchester Road), 1882, Contributing.

1-1/2 story frame and clapboard structure measuring 2 x 5 bays, set on a stone block foundation and oriented gable end to the street with the entrance centered on the main (east) side set on a stone block foundation. The glass and wood front door is sheltered by a gabled door hood with decorative scalloped wooden frieze at the bottom and is supported by plain square posts above a wooden deck. A low hip roofed porch, also with decorative jigsaw work and supported by plain posts, spans the gable end. Plain corner boards on the building give rise to an unadorned frieze underneath the boxed projecting eaves. Windows on the structure are 2/1 doublehung with simple frames. The steeply pitched gable roof is sheathed in corrugated metal with an interior brick chimney on the west slope. Extending behind the main house is a smaller 1-1/2 story wing which slopes downhill with an entry porch, wider than that of the main entrance, located on the east side. Adjacent to the entrance are two vertical board swinging garage doors. The roof of the wing is shingled in asphalt. Unlike the 2/1 windows, later replacements, that are located on most of the building, a 6/6 window lights the barn attic.

Attached to the rear wall of the wing is a clapboarded shed capped by a corrugated metal roof with vertical board swinging doors on the east side and plank siding on the south side. A stone wall and line of sugar maples are located along the driveway to the east.

The second house on the site, the present house, was constructed by Hollis and Frank Cutting in 1882. The first house stood on the site from 1819 until 1880/81. A fire in 1877 destroyed four buildings and sheds on this site and to the west. (21)

16. House, (36 Dorchester Road), original date of construction unknown, Non-contributing.

A small one story frame house set on a concrete foundation and sheathed in aluminum siding, covering clapboards. The house is shaded and largely obscured by a large weeping willow tree. The house was moved to this site about forty years ago from the Ruth Demarest property on Acorn Hill Road. (22) Although it may have served as a schoolhouse at one time, little or no historic fabric survives. The modern front door is marked by an aluminum canopy. An off center brick chimney punctuates the low asphalt gable roof. Cornice returns and corner boards have been encased in siding. Windows are 2/2 doublehung with horizontal panes. A small gable shed is attached at the rear. Due to extensive alterations, this structure is considered to be non-contributing within the district.

16A. Chicken Coop, Non-Contributing. A deteriorating frame chicken coop with a shed roof is located in the rear yard, southwest of the house.

17. House, (34 Dorchester Road), c. 1910, with later additions, Non-Contributing. Originally constructed about 1910 by Edgar Brown on a site between #54 and #58 Dorchester Road, this 1-1/2 story frame and clapboard house was moved to its present location sometime between 1932 and 1941. Set with its steeply pitched gable end to the street, it rests on a concrete foundation. On the facade one bay is occupied by a modern door next to which is a 1/1 window with simple surround. There are two windows to a side. An additional horizontally paneled and glazed door is located on the west side. Continuous shed dormers span both roof slopes. A cinder block chimney bisects the front gable, punctuating the projecting eaves. Plain corner boards outline the building.

Historically, this site housed a tannery, a starch factory (c. 1870) where starch was made from potatoes, and later a sawmill. (23) The present house is the second on the site; the first stood here between 1887 and May 27, 1932 when it was destroyed by fire. (24)

17A. Garage, c. 1975, Non-Contributing. Located to the west is a two car garage constructed of T111 siding with a low gable asphalt roof.

This nomination represents twenty contributing buildings and eight non-contributing building.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- (1) Dorothy Sears and David Jescavage. "Unpublished and Annotated List of 257 Historic Structures in Lyme, New Hampshire." (On file at Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Council and State Historic Preservation Office.)
- (2) Luane Cole, ed., Lyme, New Hampshire, Patterns and Pieces, 1761-1976. (Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 1976, p. 233.
- (3) Sears and Jescavage List.
- (4) Cole, p. 234.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Cole, p. 218-321.
- (7) Cole, p. 321.
- (8) Cole, p. 320.
- (9) Cole, p. 324.
- (10) Sears and Jescavage List.
- (11) Cole, p. 266.
- (12) Cole, p. 234.
- (13) Sears and Jescavage List.
- (14) Cole, p. 169.
- (15) Information from Dorothy Sears, January 1986.
- (16) Cole, p. 168, 235.
- (17) Information from Dorothy Sears, January 1986.
- (18) Cole, p. 233.
- (19) E. M. Woodford, Map of the Town of Lyme (Philadelphia: E. M. Woodford, 1855).
- (20) Information from Dorothy Sears, January 1986.
- (21) Cole, p. 233.
- (22) Interview with Mrs. Eugenia Gray, November 1985.

(23) Cole, p. 231.

(24) Information from Dorothy Sears, January 1986.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Lyme Center Historic District is significant architecturally as a cohesive village grouping of modest frame structures spanning from the early 19th to the 20th century, unified by quality of setting, materials and workmanship. All of the structures in the district are vernacular in nature, loosely based on popular architectural styles, as interpreted by unknown local builders.

The settlement pattern which created a village at Lyme Center in the early 19th century is a recurring theme in New England history, born out of the impact of early turnpikes and the quest of settlers for water to power mills and industry. Within the Town of Lyme's history, Lyme Center has played a key role as one of only two village centers in the Town since the 18th century. Early on, the construction of a meetinghouse at Lyme Plain, its level topography and proximity to the Connecticut River and Hanover gave the village at Lyme Plain the upper hand. Yet, it was not long before Lyme Center Village achieved importance and an economic base in its own right, encouraged by its proximity to the Grafton Turnpike and by a number of mills which sought to harness the power of Grant Brook.

In the Town's early history, what is now Lyme Center was known as Cook City (later also East Lyme or East Village). James Cook was the first to settle in what is now Lyme Center, arriving from Connecticut in 1783. He owned 64 acres located along Grant Brook comprising virtually all of the proposed district and built his first log house south of Grant Brook and west of Baker Hill Road. Cook's 14 children, the sawmill and clover mill he established on Grant Brook, and a tavern kept as a hotel for many years by his son, James Cook, Jr., helped Cook City to become a populated and prosperous village center. Cook's Tavern, which originally stood on the site of the Dimick House (#10), was a stopping place for the six and eight horse teams that hauled freight from Boston before the railroad.(1)

All of the structures contained in Lyme Center today were constructed after Major Cook's death in 1812. According to local tradition, Cook refused to allow a school on his land, and thus the School District serving Lyme Center (#9) was one of the last school districts established in Town. Because Major Cook had minor children when he died, his estate was not settled until the youngest of 14 reached his majority (21 years of age) in the mid 1820's, only then fully opening Lyme Center to development as well as schools.(2) By 1830, the Town of Lyme reached its maximum population of approximately 1800, and Lyme Center absorbed its share of population growth. Approximately half of the buildings in the district predate the Civil War and reflect this period of growth in Lyme. The earliest structures within the district(#1 and #5) are simple Cape Cod structures constructed by 1826. Construction of the Lyme Baptist Church (#5) in 1830, succeeding

an earlier meetinghouse about three quarters or a mile east of Lyme Center, reinforces the fact the Lyme Center by this time was an established center of community activity.

As originally constructed in 1830 without benefit of belfry, the church was a simple and handsome transitional exercise combining Federal and Greek revival elements. The desire for a school in Lyme Center did not come to fruition until 1839, funded by a private corporation rather than the Town. A fitting companion for the Baptist Church, the Lyme Center Academy (#9), was a rather late and simplified expression of the federal style with ornament limited to a semi-elliptical opening in the tower.

The Greek revival style is well represented within the district by two structures (#2 and #13). Both are embellished by pilasters supporting full entablatures and contain side hall entrances reflective of a national trend away from broadsided to gable fronted silhouettes.

A second substantial period of building activity impacted Lyme Center the late 19th century and early 20th century. Encouraged by the location of Sanborn's sawmill in Lyme Center (present site of #12), this building period took on two forms: alterations to existing structures and new construction. Turned posts supporting new porches and decorative jigsaw trim were applied to several buildings in the district (#11). New buildings dating to this period include #15, a simple gable fronted structure with wood scalloped friezes, and #14, embellished by bay windows and turned porch posts. Three notable examples of early 20th century design include #4, an unusual gambrel roofed complex of house, wing and barn; the former Baptist parsonage (#7), a nearly square structure capped by a hip roof and distinctive porch with machine cut woodwork; and the Dillick House (#10), a unique local example of the houses available in the early 20th century from mail order catalogues such as Sears, Roebuck and Co., and Montgomery Ward.

The history of the Lyme Center District is an evolution which has spanned over 150 years. Expectedly, the 20th century too has had its effect on the district. Unfortunately, several structures have been irretrievably altered by unsympathetic additions and synthetic siding (#16 and #17). Modern freestanding garages have taken the place of 19th century barns and carriage houses for several buildings (#2 and #17). Although it is non-contributing to the district because of its fairly recent date of construction, the Rich House (#12), a Cape style structure, is fairly compatible with neighboring structures in terms of mass, setback and detailing. The sense of a unified district is further enhanced by the compactness of the district and the minimal distances between buildings. As one approaches the district from the west, rounding a curve, the village is at once in full view. Acting as a visual barrier, this curve reinforces the sense of place while on the eastern edge a decline in the concentration of significant properties signifies exit from the village district, and demarcates the eastern district boundary. The district is further buffered by the existence of Grant Brook which acts as a natural southern boundary.

As would be expected in any village of this nature, Lyme Center continues to provide a core of community services for local residents through a school, church and post office. Yet, thanks to several factors, the Lyme Center Village remains relatively unspoiled and

unique, especially in comparison to others of its type in the general area. As has been noted, the district is largely insulated by natural and visual boundaries and is without vacant lots where detrimental infill construction could take place. The sense of place which is so important to the district is reinforced by the concentration of closely-spaced buildings, on small lots, in contrast to more expansive village centers broken up by tracts of open space, such as in the nearby villages of Hanover Center and Etna.

The impact of roads is the second factor which separates Lyme Center from neighboring village centers. Ironically, while the incorporation of the Grafton Turnpike did much to encourage the development of Lyme Center, today only a mile east of the district the Dorchester Road becomes a dirt road servicing only a few vehicles each day as it continues, as a town road, toward Canaan Center. In contrast to more substantial routes servicing heavy volumes of cars and trucks, the road leading to and through Lyme Center has avoided road widening, curbing, sidewalks and development which would lessen its rural character and integrity. It takes only one look at the nearby villages of Orfordville, NH and East Thetford, Vermont to see the adverse effects State Routes 25A and 5 respectively and resulting development have had on these once cohesive community centers.

Although none of the buildings in the Lyme Center Historic District could be described to be of "museum quality", the majority of the structures within the district remain good vernacular examples of their respective styles and periods, enhanced by a cohesive rural character. Taken collectively, the assemblage of 19th and 20th century structures comprising the Lyme Center District represents a significant example of the tastes and talents of a rural New Hampshire village center.

#### FOOTNOTES:

(1) Luane Cole, ed., Lyme, New Hampshire, Patterns and Pieces, 1761-1976. (Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 1976), p. 237.

(2) Ibid, p. 265

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Luane Cole, Ed. Lyme, New Hampshire: Patterns and Pieces, 1761-1976. Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Publishing, 1976.

Unpublished Annotated List of 257 Structures in Lyme, N.H. Prepared by Dorothy Sears and David Jescavage. (On file at Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Council and State Historic Preservation Office.)

Map of the Town of Lyme, from actual survey by W. C. Eaton, CE, Published by E. M. Woodford, Philadelphia, 1855 (Photographed in Cole, Lyme, New Hampshire: Patterns and Pieces, 1761-1976.)

Interviews with various owners and local historian Dorothy Sears.

**FORM PREPARED BY:** Lisa Mausolf, Historic Preservation Specialist, Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Council, 314 National bank Building, Lebanon, NH 03766. Tel: 603-448-1680. Date: December 1985/August 1986.

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