

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets

USGS Quad

Area Letter

Form Numbers in Area

F-4/34  
G-4/27

Maynard

0

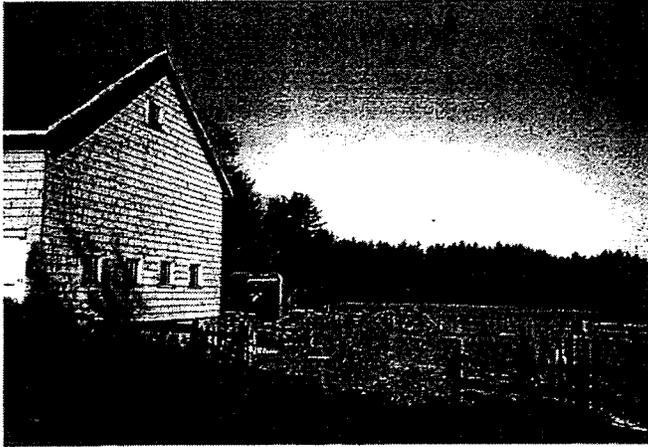
657-660  
923-928

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

Town Acton

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Photograph



East Acton

Name of Area Forbes-Morrison Farm

Present Use: recreational  
(municipal)

Construction Dates or Period 18th-20th Cent

Overall Condition fair

Intrusions and Alterations \_\_\_\_\_

Size 49.5 acres

Recorded by Arthur Krim

ii. Circle and number properties for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a continuation sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.

Organization Acton Hist. Commission

Date (month/year) March 2006

see attached map

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION  *see continuation sheet*

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE  *see continuation sheet*

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES  *see continuation sheet*

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

7/92

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

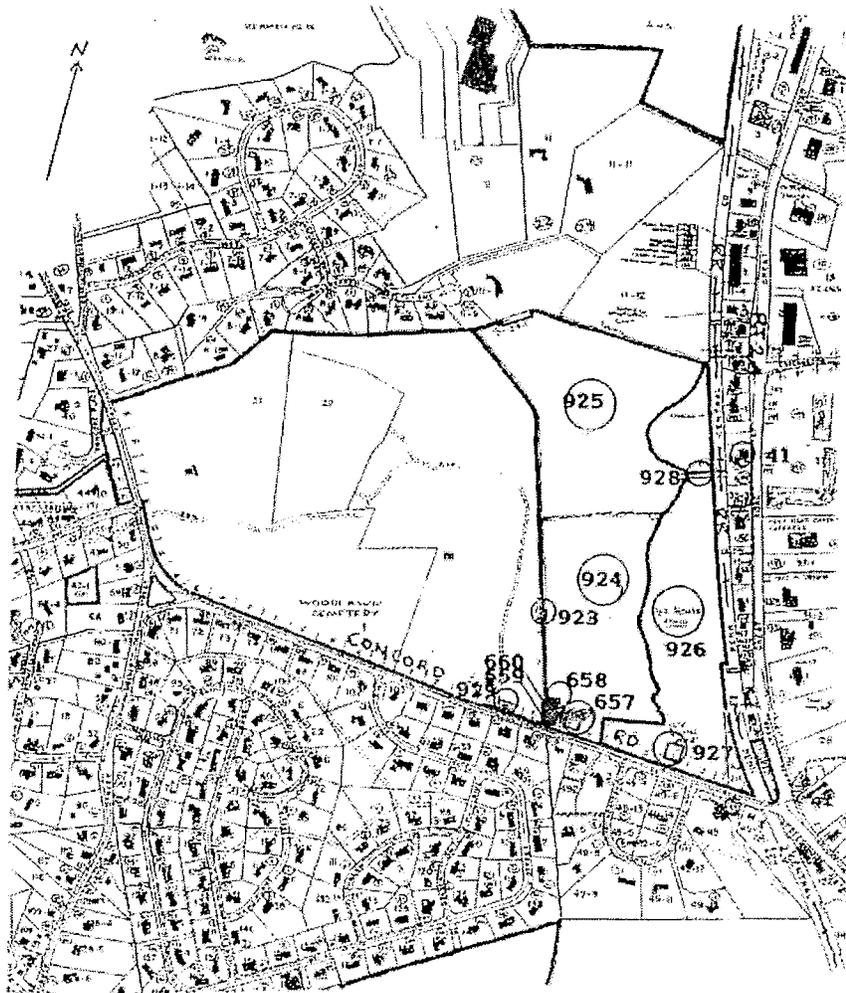
Property Address

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

Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

Area(s)	Form No.
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LOCATION MAP



Acton Assessors Maps F-4, G-4

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

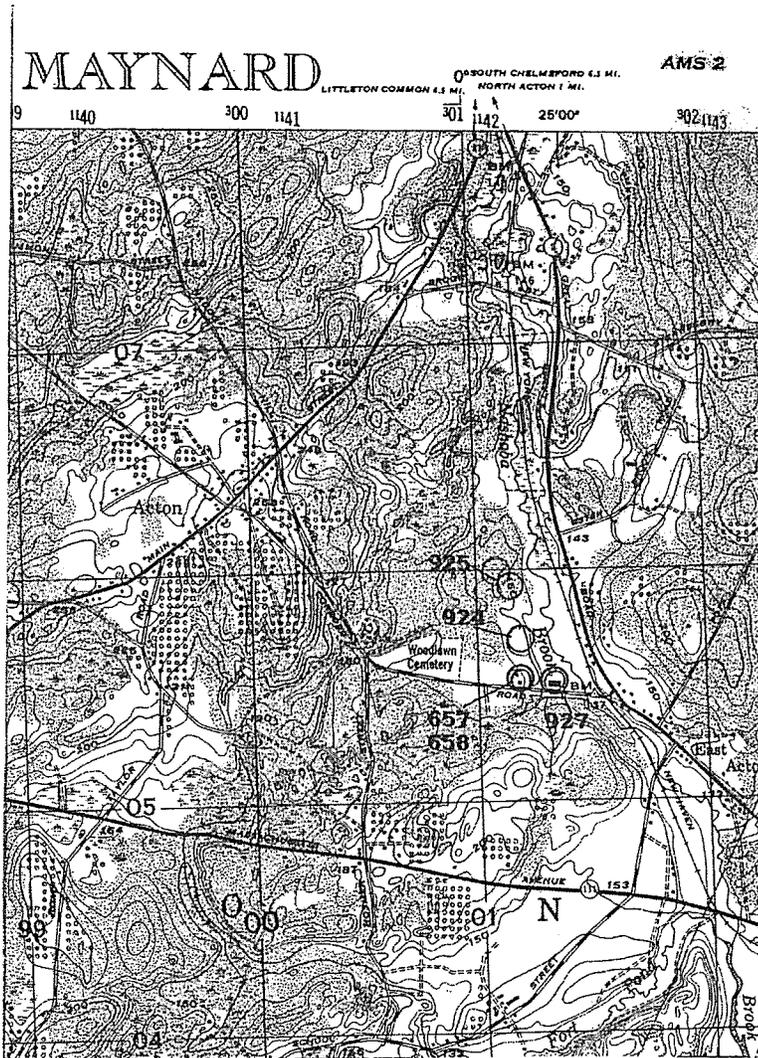
Property Address

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Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

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ARCHIVE MAP



AMS. Maynard Quadrangle. 1943

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

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

Acton 116-128 Concord Rd

Area(s)	Form No.
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### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area is comprised of the former Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road of 32.5 acres of alluvial glacial soils on a level plain of Nashoba Brook, including 16.5 acres of pasture land (ACT.924) and 16 acres of woodland (ACT.925), now owned by the Town of Acton, with an additional 17 acres of wetland along Nashoba Brook of Ice House Pond at 120-128 Concord Road (ACT.926), also owned by the Town of Acton. The area contains several buildings, and other structures related to the original dairy farm and ice business formerly operated on the site. The oldest surviving structure is the causeway (ACT.928) over Nashoba Brook at the upper (north) end of Ice House Pond, set behind the John Robbins House at 144 Great Road (ACT.41). The causeway was apparently constructed during the early 19th century, likely after the Robbins House was built in 1799-1800, and before the Framingham & Lowell Railroad (Penn Central, abandoned) was built in 1871. The causeway consists of an earthen roadway lined with stone walls on both the east and west side of Nashoba Brook, with a gap at the brook where a wooden bridge was formerly located (now razed). A 20th century structure is also evident on the west shore of Ice House Pond at 120-128 Concord Road. The concrete foundation of a former ice house (ACT.927), apparently built in 1929-1932, located on the site of an earlier wood framed ice house shown on the 1875 and 1889 Atlases. The present foundation is aligned to Concord Road with a poured concrete wall approximately 100 feet in length and the remains of a curved concrete wall overlooking Ice House Pond, apparently part of the original structure. The ice house remained active until ca.1955 when it was abandoned after hurricane damage (Klauer, 2004). The original mill dam for Ice House Pond was formed by the location of Concord Road, established in 1749, with reconstruction as a granite embankment and bridgeway in the mid-19th century (Klauer 2001:22), recently rebuilt as a concrete culvert in 1995 by the town (York 2006). The original sluiceway is located at 127 Concord Road at the site of the saw mill established in ca.1670 by Cpt. Wheeler (not surveyed).

The Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road consists of a former dairy farm with the Forbes-Morrison House (ACT.657), barn (ACT.658), auto garage (ACT.659), tool house (ACT.660),

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
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### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION II

and other outlying structures. These were apparently built by the Concord Ice Company for Edward Forbes in 1932-1933, likely from standard plans by an unknown architect. The Forbes-Morrison House (ACT.657) follows a side hall plan of two stories with a gable end roof and right side sun room, set on a concrete foundation. The design is a plain functional Colonial Revival-Craftsman Style with minimal details, as seen in the flared belt course and the portico electric lamps. Other details include the paired windows on the facade and the geometric brick fireplace in the main parlor room. The wood shingle siding and concrete stairs of the portico entrance are original to the design. The barn (ACT.658) is a substantial wood framed building, set on a concrete foundation, with a gable end roof. The barn has two central sliding doors on both north and south side forming a central passage with a smaller door on the right facade, reportedly for the oxen used in the ice harvest on Ice House Pond (ACT.926) by the Concord Ice Company (Whittier 2006).s. with the interior apparently intact, remodeled for later use as a horse stable. The design is similar to the main house with shingle siding and small paned stable windows on both the north and south sides. The auto garage (ACT.659) is a single bay plan with gable ends and shingle siding, with original hinged doors in dutch style. An adjacent hen house (ACT.660) is built of clapboard on a earth foundation, and a rear chicken coop is of plain functional construction (not surveyed). Other related structures include wood fencing near the main house and barn that likely date to the horse corals erected after 1954 when the farm was purchased by John Morrison (not surveyed).

The Forbes-Morrison Farm is bounded by a stone wall (ACT.923) on the west side with Woodlawn Cemetery, and on the north side, with a division wall between the open pasture and the woodland. These are of free stone boulder construction in the traditional style, and likely date to the mid-18th century Joseph Robbins Farm (see ACT.929) of ca.1750. The original Robbins farm occupied part of the Capt. Wheeler grant of 1669 for pasture grazing, and it is possible that some of the walls might predate the Robbins farm development. At present, the open pasture land (ACT.924) has been actively maintained since the mid-20th century, and might have been possibly part of the original Wheeler grant pasture. The north section of the

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET      Town      Property Address

Acton      116-128 Concord Rd.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION III

Forbes-Morrison Farm is woodland (ACT.925), now primarily second growth white pine forest since before World War II. A former quarry site is also located within the woodland area, likely of 19th century date (Tinden 2006).

The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area comprises one of the last intact surviving farmsteads in Acton with original buildings dating to the mid-20th century, including a farm house dairy barn garage. The Ice House Pond area contains several structures of note, including an early 19th century causeway behind 144 Great Road (ACT.41) and a mid-20th century ice house foundation at 120-128 Concord Road. The farm land is comprised of 32.5 acres of pasture and woodland that have remained intact from farmland dating to the mid-18th century defined by surviving stone walls. Moreover, the present open pasture possibly dates from the Wheeler grant of the late 17th century, a remarkable continuity of agricultural landscape in the Boston area.

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town  
 Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

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### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area consists of 32.5 acres of former the Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road (ACT.924-925) with buildings dated to 1932-1933 (ACT.657-660) by deeds and local histories, and 17 acres of wetland along Nashoba Brook forming Ice House Pond at 120-128 Concord Road (ACT.926) with relict structures dated to the 19th and 20th centuries (ACT.927-928) by deeds, maps and photographs. Both properties are now owned by the Town of Acton, acquired in 1997 and 1980 respectively. The area was originally part of the Captain Thomas Wheeler grant of 1669 for 200 acres of cattle grazing land west of Nashoba Brook (Fletcher 1890:239). Reconstruction of the Wheeler grant on modern maps indicates that a section of the original grazing land includes the section of the present Forbes-Morrison Farm (Choate 1994), comprising the present open pasture land at 116 Concord Road. The area was then included as part of the Nathan Robbins Farm after the death of Cpt. Wheeler in 1676, and later inherited by Joseph Robbins as his farm at 110 Concord Road (see ACT. 929) established in ca.1750 (Nylander ca.1980). The Robbins farm was inherited by John Robbins before 1800 and portions of the property, including the parcel at 116 Concord Road, inherited by Elbridge Robbins from George W. Robbins after 1836 (Nylander ca.1980). It is likely that the surviving stone wall (ACT.923) on the west boundary of the Forbes-Morrison Farm at Woodlawn Cemetery is possibly dated to the mid-18th century Joseph Robbins Farm, including the surviving stone wall dividing the present pasture land from the rear (north) woodland area. The 1830 Hales Map shows the Robbins Farm area as open land, including the present Forbes-Morrison Farm, both pasture (ACT.924) and rear woodland (ACT.925). After 1836 the Robbins Farm was abandoned when George W. Robbins moved to Lowell (Nylander ca.1980). The present area of the Forbes-Morrison Farm was apparently included within the John Robbins Farm at 144 Great Road (ACT.41) after 1836. It is likely that the surviving causeway over Nashoba Brook (ACT.928) to the rear of the John Robbins House (ACT.41) was constructed during the early 19th century to connect the two Robbins Farms, although no indication is given on the 1830 Hales or the 1856 Walling Maps of the causeway location. The farm land at 116 Concord Road was subsequently included with

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET  MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125	Town Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.	Property Address _____
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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE II

the Elbridge Robbins estate in 1891 as part of the "100 acres west of Nashoba Brook" in the sale to his wife, Mary Robbins (Middlesex 2158-125). Thereafter the present farmland was transferred from Mary Robbins to Amelia Robbins in 1908 and to Bernard McGrath and Thomas McGrath in 1920 as the 100 acre parcel. In 1929 this parcel was sold to the Concord Ice Company (Middlesex 5341-117), established in 1921 by John E. Forbes and William Grace, employees of the Boston Ice Company. In 1932, the section west of Ice House Pond was sold to Edward L Forbes, brother of John Forbes, with his wife Anna (Middlesex 5685-281), including the present Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road. Edward Forbes is first listed in the Acton Tax valuation in 1933, thus dating construction of the house (ACT.657), and likely the barn (ACT.658), garage (ACT.659) and hen house (ACT.660) to 1932-1933 as unique Depression period farm buildings in Acton. The farm was apparently used in conjunction with the Concord Ice Company ice harvest operations on Ice House Pond (ACT.926), with oxen stabled in the barn (ACT.658) and related grazing pasture (ACT.924) (Whittier 2006).

The land use of the Forbes-Morrison Farm can be reconstructed from USGS topographic maps of the Maynard Quadrangle for 1940-1943 that show the present pasture land (ACT.924) was open land in 1941, while the rear woodland (ACT.925) was forested in 1941 at the start of World War II. This confirms the field survey by Tidman (2006) that reports the present white pine forest dates to ca.1930 as a second growth woodland. The Forbes Farm was sold in 1952 to John D. Dartmouth of Wellesley and purchased in 1954 by John C. Morrison with 16 acres of pasture, 16 acres of woodland, and a half-acre for the house and barn. The property was converted for use as a horse farm after 1954 and was maintained until 1989, sold to the son, John C. Morrison in 1978. In 1997 the Forbes-Morrison Farm was acquired by the Town of Acton as municipal property.

The Ice House Pond (ACT.926) area of 17 acres along Nashoba Brook has been used for saw mill and iron forge water power since a mill dam established in ca.1750 at the site of present 127 Concord Road (not surveyed), outside the town municipal property area. The earliest detailed map of the area, the 1794 Town Map, shows Nashoba Brook as a dotted

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

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

Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

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### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE III

line, with the saw mill south of Concord Road (127 Concord Road), without indicating a mill pond. Likewise, the 1830 Hales Map also shows Nashoba Brook as a flowing stream without a mill pond indicated. The earliest map to show the present Ice House Pond is the 1856 Walling Map, suggesting the present pond was formed sometime after 1830, possibly in relationship to the Wetherbee Mill at 94 Great Road (Bursaw Oil Co., not surveyed). The Ice House Pond (ACT.926) has been a semi-permanent feature, reportedly drained periodically, the most recent in 1995 (York 2006). The earliest ice house is shown on the 1875 Beers Atlas of East Action Village, on the north side of Concord Road, and again on the 1889 Walker Atlas, near the present foundation of the Concord Ice Company ice house (ACT.927). This ice house also appears on the 1889 Walker Atlas and in late 19th century photographs (Klauer 2001:22). The present ice house foundation (ACT.927) was apparently built after 1929 with the purchase of the Elbridge Robbins property by the Concord Ice Company, and likely completed in 1932 with the sale of the pasture and woodland to Edward Forbes for the Forbes-Morrison Farm (see above). The ice house is shown clearly on the 1950 Maynard Quadrangle, and was active until the hurricane season of 1954-1955 (Klauer 2004)

The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area is of significant historic value as a surviving segment of open pasture land from the 17th century Cpt. Wheeler Grant and a rare intact 20th century farmstead within Acton, including the 19th century Ice House Pond wetland along Nashoba Brook and surviving 18th century stone walls of the earlier Robbins Farm. The Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road includes a unique collection of Depression era farm buildings from the 1930s, while the Ice House Pond includes remains of a Modern Period ice house that functioned until the 1950s, as well as an early 19th century causeway over Nashoba Brook behind the John Robbins House at 144 Great Road. As an ensemble, these features preserve an agricultural landscape that has been in continuous use since the Early Colonial Period of the Cpt. Wheeler Grant in 1669.

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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Acton ~~116-128 Concord Rd~~

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### AREA DATA SHEET FORBES-MORRISON FARM ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

MHC#	ADDRESS	NAME	DATE
657	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Ho.	1932-33
658	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Barn	1932-33
659	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Garage	'32-33
660	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Hen Ho	'32-33
923	116 Concord Rd.	stone wall	?18th C.
924	116 Concord Rd.	pasture land	?17th C.
925	116 Concord Rd.	woodland	20th C.
926	120-128 Concord Rd.	Ice House Pond	19th C.
927	120-128 Concord Rd.	Ice House foundation	1929-32
928	144 Great Rd-Rear	Nashoba Brook causeway	19th C.

# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town  
 Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

Property Address

Area(s)	Form No.
0	657-660 <del>823-828</del>

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town Property Address  
 Acton 1116-128 Concord Rd.

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Forbes Morrison Farm  
 116 Concord Road  
 Stone Wall ACT.923  
 West Boundary



Ice House Pond  
 120-128 Concord Rd.  
 Causeway ACT.928  
 (144 Great Road Rear)  
 (ACT.41)



Ice House Pond  
 120-128 Concord Rd  
 Causeway ACT.928  
 (144 Great Road Rear)  
 (ACT.41)

# Appendix I: Historic inventory, continued

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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 Arthur Krim

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area is composed of two parcels, including the Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road of 32.5 acres and the Ice House Pond at 120-128 Concord Road along Nashoba Brook of 17, acres, both acquired by the Town of Acton in 1997 and 1980 respectively. The Forbes-Morrison Farm remains intact as a mid-20th century farmstead established during the Great Depression by Edward Forbes, and later owned by John Morrison after 1954. The property includes the original 1932-1933 farm house and barn with 18th century stone walls bounding the pasture and woodland, that comprise the grazing land of the 17th century Captain Thomas Wheeler Grant of 1669. The Ice House Pond contains the relict structures of a 20th century ice house, built in 1929-1932 by the Concord Ice Company, and a 19th century causeway over Nashoba Brook behind the John Robbins House at 144 Great Road. The Ice Pond was created sometime after 1830 and before 1856 for commercial ice harvesting, that continued until ca.1955. The Forbes-Morrison Farm Area is recommended for National Register Consideration under Criteria A for its association with the early history of Acton and Concord, and Criteria C for its historic agricultural landscape, intact since the 17th century, and the well-preserved Depression period farmstead of house, barn and out buildings.

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# Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

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