



# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TEWKSBURY

533 NORTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

\_\_\_ 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 two-story building at **533 North Street** has a simple rectangular form under a gable front roof. The large three by four bay building rests on a concrete, stone, and brick foundation. A massive tall brick chimney projects from the south slope of the roof. The main façade faces west toward North Street and features a central pair of swinging patio doors flanked by 6/6 sash windows. The majority of the remaining fenestration on the first and second levels are pairs of 6/6 sash windows. The walls of the building are clad in wood clapboards. On the south façade, the lowest level of the building is the exposed basement. The recessed central two bays are clad in brick. The base of the brick chimney is exposed within the recess. The load bearing walls above are supported by a large square post. The openings between the post and wall of the lower level are eased to form a modified arch. A pair of swinging wood doors provides access to the interior from the recessed openings.

## 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.*

The former barn at 533 North Street was converted to a residence in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was formerly associated with an attached dwelling belonging to the Charles E Clark farm. According to assessment data the extant structure was constructed in 1795, although an earlier MHC survey form indicates the construction date as c 1889. The structure was probably a gable front bank barn. Gable front bank barns were popular from 1850 to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Charles E Clark purchased the farm in 1883 from Cyrus and Hannah Battles who had purchased the farm in 1866 for \$40,000. Deed research indicates that the farm included buildings and 87-acres on the east side of North Street and 20 acres on the west side of North Street opposite the "house".

Charles E Clark (1848-1905) was the son of Samuel Clark of Tewksbury. He married his wife Mary (1850-1910) in 1870 and they had one son Clarence in 1873. After Charles Clark's death in 1905, Mary and Clarence sold the farm to Albert Blaisdell. The farm was acquired later that same year by Adelbert Ames.

Adelbert Ames (1835-1933) was born in Rockland Maine and graduated from the United State Military Academy at West Point in 1861. He served with the Union Army during the Civil War from 1861-1865 and received a Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry at the Battle of Bull Run where he was badly wounded in the right thigh in 1861. In 1864 Ames was colonel in the regular army and his division served under Maj. Gen Benjamin Franklin Butler, who would become his father-in-law. After the war he was appointed military Governor of Mississippi in 1868 and upon readmission of Mississippi to the United States, he was elected a United States Senator, serving from 1870 to 1874 when he again became Governor of Mississippi.

In 1870 he married Blanche Butler (1845-1939), General Benj F Butler's daughter. Blanche Bulter was a gardener, sculptor, and with an interest in geneology. She compiled a collection of her family's papers which were published by her family in 1957 as *Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century*. When Adelbert Ames and his wife returned to Massachusetts he became involved with manufacturing businesses in the Lowell area and they settled in Tewksbury purchasing 700 acres of land on Prospect Hill. In 1906 Adelbert Ames constructed a seventeen-room castle near the top of Prospect Hill. Plans in the registry of deeds depict the entry gate to this castle off of North Street and the adjacent buildings at 533 North Street.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TEWKSBUURY

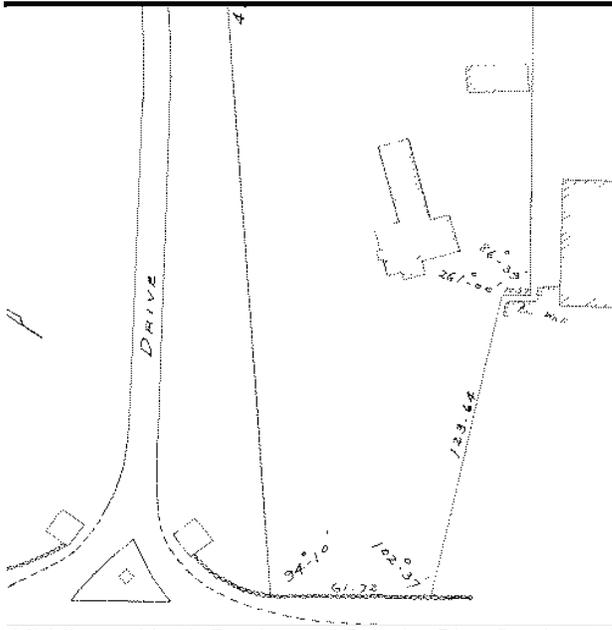
533 NORTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



PL BK 60 PG 52  
DATE Nov. 19, 1936  
"For Attested Plan See Original"

*Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Plan Book 60, Page 52. The gate to the Ames Castle is located in the lower left. The building pictured in the center of the plan was the home of Butler Ames. The drive is now Catamount Road.*

According to Patton's *Ask Now of the Days that are Past* the house and barn at 533 North Street, the Clark Homestead" at the entrance to the castle became the home of Blanche and Adelbert's son, Butler Ames (1871-1954), although the land was owned by Blanche Butler Stevens until her death in 1939.

Butler Ames attended Phillips Exeter Academy and graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1894. He left the Army attended MIT where he earned a degree as a mechanical and electrical engineer in 1896. During the Spanish American War he re-enlisted and served as an engineer officer. He was promoted to Lt. Colonel in 1898 and served as the civil administrator of the Arecibo district of Puerto Rico. He served as a representative to the Massachusetts House of Representatives (1897-1899) and the United States Congress (1903-1913). He was the president of United States Cartridge Co, treasurer of Heinze Electric Co. of Lowell, a director of the Wamesit Power Co in Tewksbury and Ames Textile Corp in Lowell. He was appointed General in the Massachusetts State Guard and served as Commander 1918-1919. He died in Tewksbury in 1954.

Deed research indicates that Blanche Butler Ames sold a parcel off North Street with access from the drive that led uphill to the castle to her son Butler in 1936. A plan associated with that deed depicts the location of the dwelling (above). It seems likely that the Clark house was occupied by Butler Ames until 1936 when he constructed a new dwelling to the north on the parcel his mother deeded him. Municipal plans for work on North Street in 1937-1938 depict only the rectangular form of the extant structure and not the attached dwelling seen on the 1936 plan. The Clark dwelling was likely demolished 1936-1937.

In 1944 the heirs of Blanche Butler Ames sold the property to Nathan Aldrich, a salesman, and his wife Dorothy. Their son Nathan was employed in building construction and it is likely that the Aldrich's converted the structure to a two family unit before 1965, when they rented the second residential unit, 533A North Street, to Stephen Defina, a Xerox operator, and his wife Sara. The current owner is Joanne Aldrich.

In the 1960s the Ames' Castle became a nursing home and the rest of the 700-acre estate was subdivided. Most of the ranches, split levels, and contemporary homes on the estate's former land were built in the 1970s.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- U.S. Census Records. 1790-1930.
- Directories. 1896-97, 1898-99, 1900-01, 1911-12, 1913-14, 1915-16, 1919, 1927, 1930-31, 1932-33, 1937-38, 1940-41, 1942-1943, 1949 [Ancestry], 1953, 1955, 1961, and 1967.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

TEWKSBURY

533 NORTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

--	--

- Map of the Town of Tewksbury 1852. Henry F Walling. Boston, MA.
- 1865 Map of Tewkesbury with inset.
- Atlas of Middlesex County 1875. FW Beers.
- Altas of Middlesex County 1889. Geo H Walker & Co.
- List of Residents by Streets, Ages 17 years and over, In the Town of Tewksbury Mass. As prepared by the Board of Registrars (various years 1965-)
- Valuations of the Real and Personal Estate of the Town of Tewksbury.
- North Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ye Towne Book*. Town of Tewksbury. 1934.
- Patton, Harold J. *Ask Now of the Days that are Past*. Higginson Book Co. 1964.
- Biographical Directory of the United States Congress [www.bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=A000173](http://www.bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=A000173)  
 Accessed 2 February 2010.