



CHARLTON CENTER NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



Tennis on Charlton Common, August 13, 1902

Foreground - left - Jessie Williams Mann, right - Ernest Carpenter

Background - left - unknown, right - Elsie Sweet

Structures - left to right - Nelson McIntire home; Lemuel Baker's home; Grange Hall;
Universalists Parsonage occupied by Rev. Edgar Preble; and Mrs. John Pratt's place.

Photo - Gift from D.H. Tucker collection

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The National Register of Historic Places is a Federal list of individual buildings, sites and structures, important in American history, culture or architecture. It recognizes that the area is important to the history of the community, state or nation. It in no way will limit the owners use of their property unless public monies are used.

The Charlton Historical Commission has long recognized the importance of the Center area as a outstanding historical and cultural asset. Property owners surrounding the Common requested a survey to determine appropriateness for inclusion as a National Resister District. Massachusetts Historic Commission and the National Parks Service accepted the Charlton Center district for listing in 1996.

The Charlton Center Historic District is a well-preserved example of a 19th and early 20th century village center. An elliptical town green is at the heart of this district; it was donated in 1762 for use as a common, militia training field and meeting house site. The green is flanked by several excellent examples of period homes. A late Colonial cemetery and an 1837 Town pound is at the south end. The district has been home to gentry, merchants, tradesmen and farmers alike. The district represents the growth of a country center village from ecclesiastical land, municipal gathering point to a diverse working village.

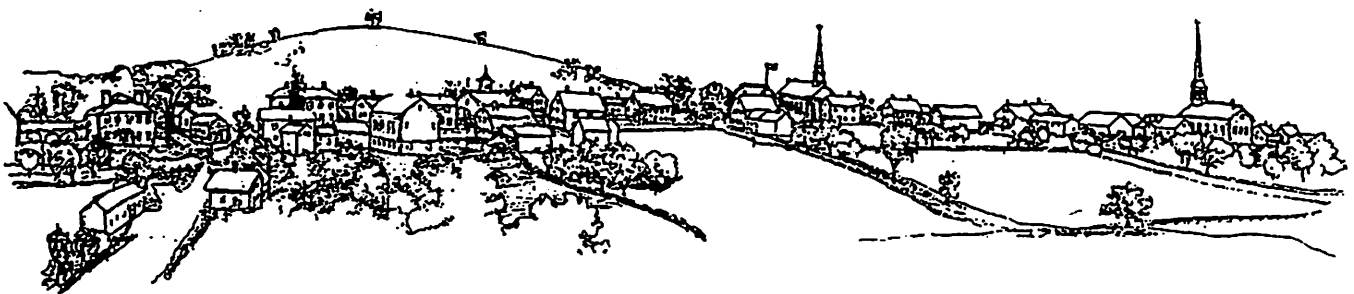
About 1680 a group of men from north of Boston were granted a large section of land in the area of Oxford. Five grantees retained the western part of the Oxford lands for sale. After settlement of these lands, the remoteness to Oxford church caused a petition for separation. Ebenezer McIntire bought the 100 acre lot which is now Charlton Center in 1734. Here he opened a tavern at the crossing of the lane which led from Brookfield to Oxford and the road over Dresser Hill from Leicester to Dudley.

Until the 20th century Charlton Center remained a quiet residential and government center; this included the establishment of the imposing Salem Town mansion house and the General Spurr house. General Spurr was among the "Indians" who threw the tea into Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party. He later moved to Charlton to manage 3000 acres of his father-in-law's lands. His house still stands at 27 Main Street. The 1806 Turnpike and the 1837 railroad bypassed the center village. Sporadic building continued during the 19th century. The importance of Charlton Center re-emerged at the turn of the 20th century. The Grange building was built in 1891. Several houses were constructed by local men, the Town Hall was built in 1905. The impetus for this spurt of growth was the arrival of the trolley through the Center. The trolley line re-focused attention to Charlton Center. Few buildings were erected for the next 50 years and much of the streetscape had remained unaltered, highlighting the uniqueness of the area.

Establishment of the area, as a National Register candidate, began with a survey of each of the structures in the area, researching their builders and date of construction, if possible. Forms were then completed with photos of each taken. A background history of the area was written, areas of significance to the state, and country were compiled and submitted along with the survey forms. State officers visited Charlton to view the proposed district and comment on boundaries to include the most significant structures and sites which was completed in 1995. The final area included 44 contributing buildings, five contributing sites and five objects.

Places of outstanding interest include:

- A. Dexter Memorial Town Hall, 40 main Street. (Frost, Briggs and Chamberlain, architects) Built in 1904 as a gift of William H. Dexter, a successful businessman, to his native town for governmental offices and library. This municipal hall in the modified Colonial revival style is the dominate architectural feature of Charlton Common. The hall is built on the site of the earlier Belleview Hotel, burned in 1885. The Civil War monument fronting the hall was also a gift from Dexter in 1902.
- B. This granite monument honors Charlton's outstanding son, Dr. William T.G. Morton (1819-1868) who first demonstrated the use of ether as an anesthesia in 1846. The monument was suggested by the Old Home Day Association and received the support of the Massachusetts Dental Society to commission and erect the memorial on the centennial of his birth. (T.J. McAulliffe, sculpture)
- C. Charlton High School (Town Hall annex) 35 Main Street. It was built in 1923 with additions in 1949. W. H. Mclean, S.W. Hayes architects. This brick Classical Revival bungalow is built on the earlier site of the third meeting house or Universalist Church which burned. This central school built to house consolidated grades 3 - 12, was later converted to an intermediate in 1973. With the building of a new school, the building was converted to municipal uses in 1989.
- D. Town Pound, Oxford Road, 1837. Replaces an earlier pound west of Charlton Common. Used to impound stray animals that were found to be a nuisance. Pound-keepers were elected until the 1980's.
- E. Baypath Cemetery, Dresser Hill Road at Oxford Road. The land given by Ebenezer McIntire in 1764 for burial purposes, and it was enlarged in 1812 and 1841. It is the earliest public cemetery in Charlton. The cemetery contains over 800 monuments, twelve tombs, and a crypt. Interments include the graves of Ebenezer McIntire, who gave the land; Grizzley Adams, famed mountain man and showman; Caleb Curtis, first minister in Charlton; John Spurr, participant in the Boston Tea Party and Hiram Marble, 19th century spiritualist.



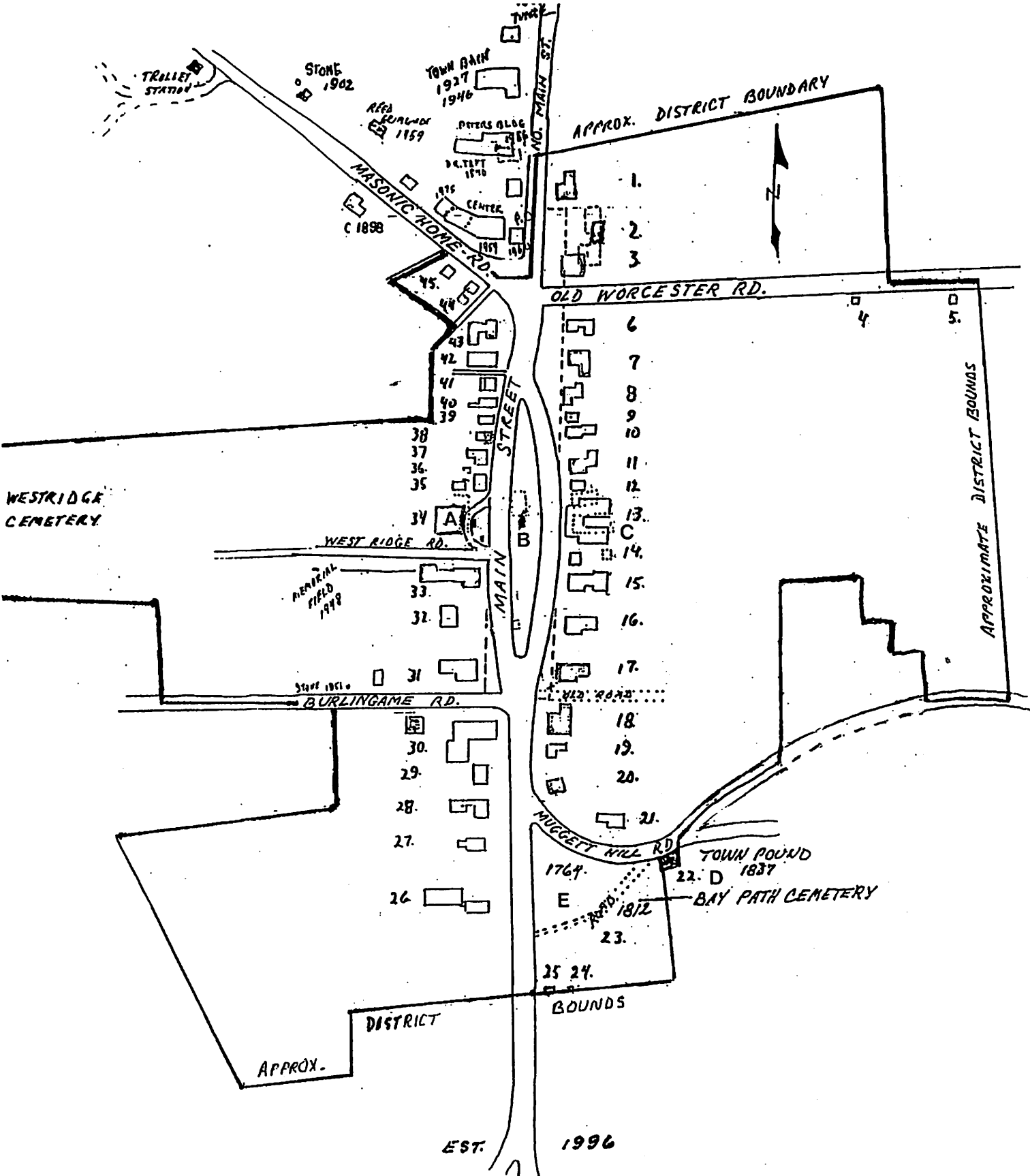
CHARLTON.

Looking East from Cemetery Hill.

1898

Charlton Center National Register Historic District

MAP NO.	ADDRESS	HISTORIC NAME	DATE	STYLE
1	57 No. Main Street	Salem Town	1775	Federal/altered
2	61 No. Main Street	Charlton Family Practice	1988	none
3	63 No. Main Street	Salem Town Reproduction	1986	Federal/revival
4	189 Old Worcester Road	Arthur Dodge	1931	Craftsman
5	181 Old Worcester Road	Luther Burlingame	1928	Bungalow
6	5 Main Street	Samuel Rockwood	1841	Greek Revival
7	9 Main Street	Ebenezer Collier	1820	Federal
8	13 Main Street	John Pratt	1813	Federal
9	17 Main Street	Willis Baker Funeral Home	1925	Bungalow
10	19 Main Street	Varanus Johnson	1872	Italianate
11	27 Main Street	Gen. John Spurr	1798	Federal
12	31 Main Street	Royal Baker	1926	Dutch Colonial
13	35 Main Street	Charlton High School (C)	1923	Classical Revival
14	43 Main Street	H. Duplessis	1965	Ranch
15	45 Main Street	Dr. Ebenezer Phillips	1803	Federal
16	51 Main Street	Frank Knight	1903	Queen Anne
17	57 Main Street	Old Congregational Parsonage	1882	Italianate
18	63 Main Street	Leonard Town	1826	Federal Greek Revival
19	65 Main Street	Leonard Town Shop	1804	Cape
20	67 Main Street	William Robbins	1908	Bungalow/altered
21	5 Oxford Road	Charles Stone	1941	Cape
22	Oxford Road	Town Pound (D)	1837	Landscape
23	Dresser Hill Road	Bay Path Cemetery (E)	1764	Landscape
24	Dresser Hill Road	Air Patrol Hut	1953	none
25	Dresser Hill Road	Hearse House	1857	vernacular
26	4 Dresser Hill Road	King-Blood House	1911	Bungalow
27	72 Main Street	Ernest Blood	1929	Bungalow
28	68 Main Street	Captain King	1870	Cape
29	66 Main Street	Federated Parsonage	1950	Cape
30	64 Main Street	Federated Church	1940	Colonial Revival
31	58 Main Street	William Weld	1793	Federal
32	52 Main Street	Touchette	1954	Ranch
33	46 Main Street	Weld Tavern	1804	Federal
34	44 Main Street	Dexter Memorial Town Hall (A)	1904	Georgian Revival
34-B	Common	Dr. Morton Monument (B)	1924	Monument
35	36 Main Street	Grain Store	1886	Colonial Revival
36	34 Main Street	Woodbury/Baker Store	1886	Colonial Revival
37	28 Main Street	T. D. Moore	1827	Federal
38	28 Main Street	Frank Baker	1906	Colonial Revival
39	22 Main Street	Dr. Paul Abell	1903	Queen Anne
40	18 Main Street	Nelson McIntire	1798	Federal
41	14 Main Street	Lemuel Baker	1785	Federal
42	10 Main Street	Grange Hall	1891	Greek Revival
43	6 Main Street	Lyre House	c. 1830	Greek Revival
44	114 Masonic Home Road	Melvin Baker	1940	Cape
45	112 Masonic Home Road	Hereeden-Norcross	1857	Greek Revival



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Main Street, Charlton Center, Massachusetts circa 1908. This view is looking south from the north end of the common.

Photo - Compliments of Quentin Kuehl



Main Street, Charlton Center, Massachusetts circa 1918. This view is a bird's view looking north from the Congregational Church Tower.

Photo - Courtesy of Robert Ewing from the Dorothy Woodbury Estate.