NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nelson Family Farm

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number End of Shackley Hill Rd., .8 Mi. No. of Junc. W/Rt. 108 N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Livermore ☒ vicinity

state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04254

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Nelson Family Farm
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☒ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
4	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Agricultural Field
Agriculture/Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Agricultural Field
Agriculture/Agricultural Outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite
walls Stone/Granite
Wood/Shingle
roof Asphalt
other Striking use of granite on two walls

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Nelson Family Farm is located on the slope of Hamlin Hill near the Livermore-Canton town line. Presently embracing fifty-eight acres of rolling terrain, a portion of which is planted in apple trees, the farm contains a large detached nineteenth century barn, rock boundary walls, and an unusual part-granite dwelling whose frame ell extends to a carriage house. These various elements are described in the following inventory list with numbers corresponding to the map.

1. DWELLING

The existing house is a one-and-a-half story granite and frame building with an asymmetrically composed gable front facade. Facing east, this elevation, which is constructed of granite walls approximately two feet thick, features a projecting entrance vestibule located off-center (southward) with a single two-over-two window flanking it to the south and two to the north. A second entry that leads into a frame addition is located behind a porch at the northeast corner. There are two windows positioned near each other in the upper story. The granite wall surface - which is composed of quarry-faced pieces of unequal size - on this elevation is highly picturesque with projecting stringcourses located at the water table and at the lintels and sills of the windows. Below the shallow gable of the vestibule are two concentric semi-elliptical arches formed of granite that are in turn supported by granite posts and lintel. The imaginative use of granite is even more pronounced at the corner entry where wedge-shaped slabs are built up to the slope of the main roof. This load is supported by two shafts of granite.

Granite is also utilized on the three-bay south elevation of the main house. Its somewhat more ordered fenestration pattern employs a single window in the center bay along with paired flanking units. A shed dormer clad in weatherboards and containing four windows spans two-thirds of the roof. Like the facade, the use of granite here is very inventive. Stringcourses are again employed at the water-table as well as at the sills and lintels of the windows. In addition, arches have been installed above the double windows and vertical members installed between the sill level stringcourse and the water-table create a paneled effect. The balance of the elevation contains a short recessed porch at the southwest corner, behind which is a door and single six-over-six window. A wide sliding door and a single one-over-one window are located on the south side of the ell connector. This side of the frame portion of the building is sheathed in weatherboards, as is the front (east) side of the carriage house.

In contrast, the north and west sides of the house/ell/barn are covered in wood shingles. A variety of window openings are asymmetrically spaced along these walls, as well as on the rear gable end of the house. Additionally, there is a dormer on the north side of the house where the

walls are quite low by virtue of a rapid change in the grade. Passage into the carriage house from the ell is made through a small shed attached to the rear of the ell; it also contains the privy. The front elevation of the carriage house (believed to have been built in 1866) features a symmetrical fenestration pattern consisting of a large central door with flanking two-over-two windows, and two more in the upper story. There are four windows on the lower level of the south side as well as nine small ones below the eaves; the latter were inserted when chickens were raised in the upper level. A high granite foundation on the south side makes the basement accessible.

The interior of the house has been substantially altered, particularly the first floor where the original floor plan and finishes have been changed. However, the upper story appears to be reasonably intact. The enclosed stair rises to a large rectangular landing/hall off of which are four bedrooms. A handrail with chamfered posts and slat balusters survives in this hall area as well as four-panel doors. Originally, the ell connecting house and barn was utilized as a wood shed.

2. DETACHED BARN

Standing some seventy-five feet to the southwest of the house is the large detached barn thought to have been erected in 1877 after an earlier structure was destroyed by fire. It is clad in weatherboards on the front (north) elevation and the long five-bay east side. The facade has a large centrally-located opening with a transom, a smaller door at the northeast corner and two nine-over-six windows below the gable peak. Its broad cornice terminates with gable end returns. Small windows and one large door are symmetrically located along the east side on the lower level and below the eaves. A variety of window openings are located on the rear and west side elevations, the latter of which also features a shed addition along one-half of the wall. A square ventilator with a pyramidal roof crowns the center of the roof.

3. STONE WALLS AND FIELDS

The present property features a number of stone boundary walls that delineate both the property lines as well as field subdivisions within it. Although the precise origin and use of these spaces is not yet known, it is thought that the perimeter walls may in fact represent a property boundary from the earliest period of the farm. Subsequent land purchases increased the size of the Nelson Farm well beyond these walls, but when the property was subdivided in the late twentieth century these again delineated the reduced boundary. The smaller enclosures within the perimeter undoubtedly represent smaller pastures. Since early in this century these pastures have been planted with apple trees thereby sustaining the commercial farm operation.

Nelson Family Farm
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1830–1942

Significant Dates

c. 1830
1866
1877

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nelson, Alexander, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository:

_____

The Nelson Family Farm consists of a fifty-eight acre parcel of property on which is located a nineteenth century connected farm complex, a large detached barn, and stone boundary walls. Located on a hillside near the Androscoggin/Oxford County line, the farm is especially noteworthy for its c. 1830 dwelling; a one-and-a-half story building whose two principal elevations are constructed of rough split granite laid up in a highly inventive manner. The property is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion A for its representation of nineteenth century farming practices and criterion C for the architectural significance of the house and its connected complex.

It is thought that the property which constitutes the Nelson farm was first settled by Deacon Alexander Nelson (1795-1886) about 1816. Nelson's father Nathan had acquired the 100 acre tract for $500.00 late in 1815, and he in turn transferred it to his son in September of the following year. A graduate of Hebron Academy, Alexander Nelson subsequently served as a corporal in the War of 1812. Having purchased the farm from his father, Nelson married Lydia Loring (1785-1819) in 1817. Family tradition holds that she and her infant daughter Jerusha died in a house fire in 1819, and it was after this event that Nelson commenced the construction of his granite, fireproof house. While this scenario is certainly plausible, it would appear, based on Greek Revival stylistic features, that the building of this house may not have started until the 1830s at the earliest. Alexander Nelson married a second time within four years of his first wife's death, this time to a woman known only as Hannah F. (1794-1823). Following her death he married Elizabeth Griffith (1797-1874) with whom he had three children beginning with Samuel in 1830. It may be, therefore, that the substantial undertaking of erecting the granite house began after this third marriage. Tradition also maintains that Alexander constructed the dwelling himself utilizing the material which was abundantly available on his property. The absence of a specific quarry site is, in fact, evident by a number of large boulders in the fields which were clearly split but never used.

At the taking of the 1850 Census, Alexander Nelson's farm was valued at $1,000 and contained 75 acres of improved land and 37 acres of unimproved land. In comparison to his neighbors, Alexander's was a fairly typical farm both in its size and the diversity of its products. Of the latter, his 21 sheep produced 80 pounds of wool and his 4 milk cows 150 pounds of butter and 300 pounds of cheese. In addition, he had orchard products valued at $50.

In 1853, Alexander Nelson sold the modest farm which he had developed to his son Samuel A. Nelson, although he and his wife continued to live here until their deaths. The Agricultural Census of 1860 shows that the farm had grown in size during the preceding decade and now contained 80 acres of improved land and 50 acres of unimproved land. Nearly double the amount of

wheat and oats were being produced, while the wool output was sharply reduced there being only ten sheep among the livestock. A decade later an additional ten acres of land had been improved and the sheep herd brought nearly back to its size in 1850. The 1860s witnessed Samuel's marriage (1861) to Lucy Ellen Alden (1844-1923) and the construction in 1866 of the existing carriage house, probably bringing the connected complex to its present configuration. A further addition was made to the property in 1877 with the construction of the large detached barn, a replacement for one previously destroyed by fire. By 1880, the farm consisted of 25 acres of tilled land, 35 acres of permanent meadow and 40 acres of unimproved land. An additional five acres were planted in orchard containing 400 bearing trees.

Following Samuel Nelson's death, his widow continued to occupy the farm until 1910 when she sold it out of the family to Herbert Tucker. Tucker transferred it in 1920 to Percy Brown who subsequently made some alterations to the house. The Browns expanded the orchard to the point that it covered most of the previously cleared land, a pattern of use which is maintained to this day.

The history of the Nelson farm illustrates a fairly typical pattern of agricultural development in nineteenth century Maine. As indicated by the Census figures, a diversity of products were grown on the farm some of which were undoubtedly intended for sale. This is particularly true of the sheep herd, the wool from which could easily be marketed to the State's rapidly developing textile industry. The construction of a connected farm complex is also a pattern repeated on numerous farms in Maine during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although little is known about the property's appearance at mid-century, the construction of the carriage house in 1866 at the end of the line of house and ell clearly shows a conscious decision to organize the buildings in this fashion.

In addition to the farm complex as a whole, the property's architectural significance is evident in the unique qualities of the house. A number of granite houses have been identified throughout the State and several are listed in the National Register including the Stone House in Bridgton (N.R. 7/19/84), the Theodore Jellison House in Calais (N.R. 11/23/84), and the Mosquito Island House (N.R. 9/29/83) in the vicinity of St. George. These buildings typically employ cut granite blocks of similar dimension and have little ornamentation executed in stone. By comparison, the Nelson House is a fantasy of architectural composition not only in the detailing and irregular pattern of the stone, but in the fact that it is granite on only two sides. Thus, it stands as a remarkable legacy to the inventiveness of its builder and owner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Androscoggin and Oxford County Registry of Deeds. Auburn and South Paris, Maine.

Nelson Family Farm File. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Census of the United States. 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880. Oxford and Androscoggin Counties, Maine. Agricultural Schedule. Microfilm Copy at Maine State Archives, Augusta.

Hubka, Thomas C. Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England. 1984.

Nelson Family Farm
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 58

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	19	393210	4918270
2	19	393110	4917640
3	19	391880	4917570
4	19	391740	4918200

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 1992

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property of 58 acres occupies the Town of Livermore Tax Map R8, Lot 47. The attached surveyor's map delineates this boundary and indicates the relative position of significant features.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is drawn to embrace the remaining rural parcel of property which is historically and presently associated with the Nelson Farm. This includes a number of stone boundary walls that in all likelihood delineate the edges of much of the historically improved acreage.