

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Marlborough

Frye Boot Company

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)
C

Form No.
116

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Although John A. Frye did make his start in the shoe business in 1863, he did not move his operations here until at least 1865. He began manufacturing on his own in the building of his former partner, John Winslow Stevens, on lower Pleasant Street, and moved a year later to a shop on Elm Street. In 1865 (one source says 1869), he traded buildings with L.A. Howe, who had just put up the first section of Building A. Mr. Frye expanded the business to include the manufacture of boots in 1883, at about the time that the eastern section of the building was added. In 1889 the Frye factory was the first to introduce electric power for its operations. Sometime between 1890 and 1896, Building B was built as a curry shop. In later years it was used for various purposes, and for many years functioned mainly as a storehouse.

Early in this century, at least, the company may have utilized the old brick storehouse (MHC #145) on the Morse & Bigelow property just southeast of Building B, as it is shown in 1920 as a "storehouse for heel plates and machinery." (See Form #144-145, Morse & Bigelow Store.) Over the years the company owned or occupied other buildings in the area as well, some of them as tenement houses for factory workers.



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Additional information by Anne Forbes, consultant to Marlborough Historical Commission, 3/31/94:

ASSESSOR'S # 69-76, -76A, -92

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

The Frye Shoe Co. complex consists of two large four-story wood-frame buildings connected by a covered walkway at second story level. Building A (see sketch map), which stretches over half a block along Chestnut Street, has a shallow-gabled roof and a fieldstone and brick foundation. Less well-preserved than the other, much of its wood-shingle cladding is covered with wide aluminum siding, and most of its windows have been converted to four-part awning windows. (Bands of 6-over-6-sash with molded surrounds are still in place in the rear wall of the east end, however.) This building, which was originally three stories, with a gabled roof, was expanded at least five times. By 1890 it had been raised to four stories, and in that year the long eastern section was added, followed within a few years by the four-story shed-roofed section on the south side. A five-story square stair tower abutting the northeast face of the main facade was also added in 1890, with the main entry located in its base. Although the recessed door is modern, the entry retains its flat, bracketed hood. Two flat-roofed one-story additions stand against the north facade--one extending west from the tower, the other flanking the northwest corner. Extending to the rear of the east part of the building is a one-story brick engine room with a sheet-metal smokestack and an assortment of other vents and chimneys. The builder for most of these additions was H.K. Andrews of Marlborough.

Building B, situated south of the first and connected to it by a covered, wood-shingled walkway (probably also originally a belt-way) at the second story, was constructed between 1890 and 1896. In a better state of preservation, this is also a shallow-gable-roofed, four-story building on a brick foundation. Although its doors have been replaced, it retains nearly all its windows, which are double 4-over-4-sash, in molded surrounds. This is a wide, basically rectangular building, which appears to have started out as a long L-shaped structure. In about 1900, it was enlarged by filling in the angle of the L, leaving the west end of the original section projecting toward Pleasant Street, and the new south wall curving to meet the original east wing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Centennial '90: Marlborough the City. 1990.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. History of Middlesex County. 1890..

Maps and atlases: Beers, 1875; Walker, 1889; Sanborn maps.

Bigelow, Ella. Historical Reminiscences of the Early Times in Marlborough. 1910.

Directories.

Marlborough Enterprise. 2/21/1890.

Pictorial Marlborough. 1879.

[X] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Community

Property Address

Marlborough

84 Chestnut Street

Area(s) Form No(s).

C 116

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 Forbes / Schuler

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

The Frye Boot Company is individually eligible for the National Register for meeting Criteria A and C. The oversized factory building, which consists of two attached four-story wood-frame blocks, is associated with the development of the local boot and shoe industry, an important aspect of the social and economic development of Marlborough. It is also representative of large scale mill building which evolved over a series of construction periods in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The property retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.