

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SWN.61
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Stevens Mansion
<b>Common Name:</b>	Stevens, Frank S. Home for Boys
<b>Address:</b>	24 Main St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Swansea
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Gardner's Neck;
<b>Local No:</b>	34;
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1855
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Italianate;
<b>Use(s):</b>	Agricultural; Private School; Single Family Dwelling House;
<b>Significance:</b>	Agriculture; Architecture;
<b>Area(s):</b>	SWN.D
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Nat'l Register District (02/16/1990); Nat'l Register MRA (02/16/1990);
<b>Building Materials:</b>	Wall: Wood Clapboard;
<b>Demolished</b>	No



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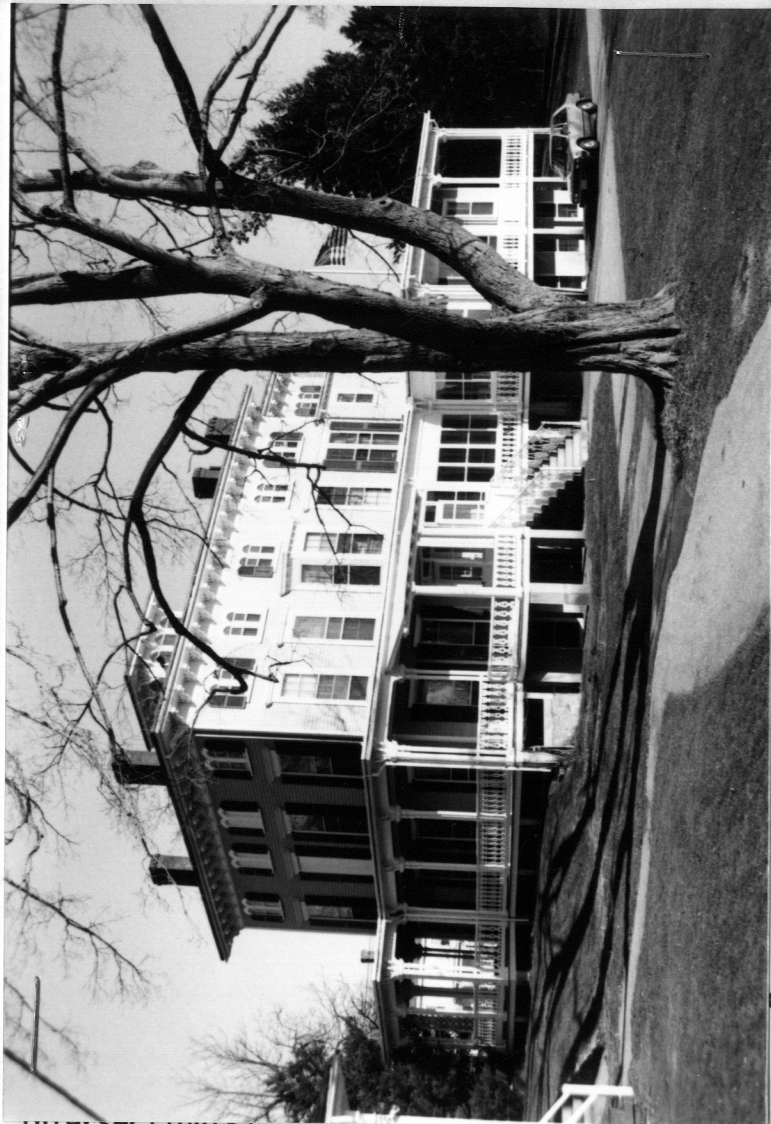
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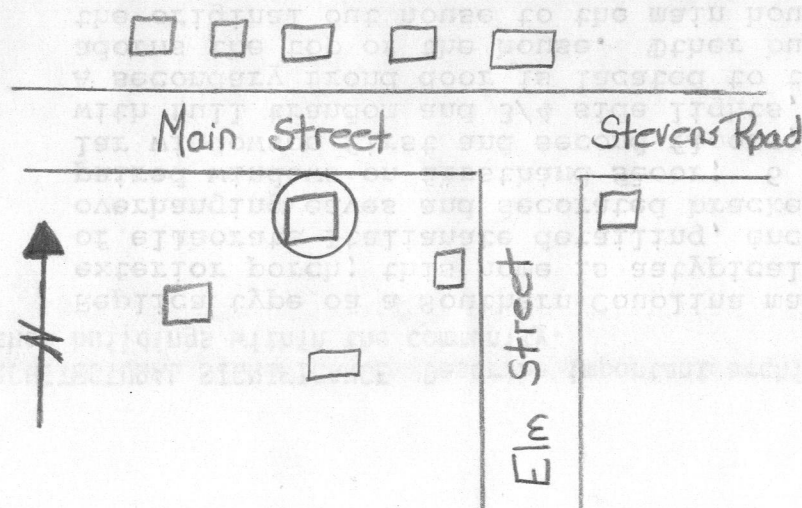
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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Intersection(s).  
Indicate north



UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

USGS QUADRANGLE Fall River, Mass - R.I. 1967

SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

PL - GARD NRMRA NRDIS 72/10/190 NR

USGS - FALL

AREA

FORM NO.

DE	61
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9C  
INC

Town SWANSEA

Address 24 Main Street

Historic Name Stevens Mansion

Use: Present Frank S. Stevens Home

Original for Boys Residence

### DESCRIPTION

Date 1855

Source Fall River Registry of Deeds

Style Italianate

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior Wall Fabric Clapboard

Outbuildings Original Butlers home and out building

Major Alterations (with dates) small addition c. 1873

Condition \_\_\_\_\_

Moved No Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage Over one acre

Setting Once a horse farm, much of the land today is still open and spacious

The main house is close to the major

road with three of the four known original buildings still in use.

Recorded by K. Valente / H. Pierce ' 78

Organization Swansea Historical Commission

Date April, 1986



## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

Replica type of a Southern Carolina mansion, complete with full wrap around exterior porch; this home is atypical of the area. The main house is full of elaborate Italianate detailing, including low pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves and decorated brackets beneath; tall, narrow, fully arched paired windows on the third floor; 6 over 6, double hung, paired, rectangular windows on first and second floors, and an ornate doored entry way complete with full transom and 3/4 side lights, with bracketed pilasters on both sides. A secondary front door is located to the left, and a bracketed coupola adorns the top of the house. Other buildings included on property include the original out house to the main house, embellished atop with a bird house in replica of the main house; the carriage house, where horse shoeing was done with later added on garages; the stable, now the school house; and 3 dormitories, built in 1935. Located east of the main house is the original butlers quarters and outhouse, which are both older than the main house.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The house was erected by Julia A. Birch while her husband was engaged in organizing the stage business in California. Mr. Birch lost his life in the shipwreck of the Central America in 1857. The next year Mrs. Birch married her first husband's business partner, Frank Shaw Stevens. They returned to live in Swansea permanently in 1858. A fortune had been made in the Consolidated Stage Coach lines in California and other lines. Besides carrying passengers they held lucrative mail contracts. After the sale of the Stage Coach Lines, Mr. Stevens invested in the burgeoning textile mill business in Fall River and was a partner in the firm of Paris and Allen wholesale liquor dealers of New York. Through this affiliation he became interested in the Old Crow Distillery in Kentucky. In addition to his business activities Mr. Stevens ran a large farm and was a breeder of fine horses. Many of the public buildings in Swansea were gifts from this family.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

James E. Birch, Galucci, Sacramento, 1958.  
 Fall River Registry of Deeds  
 Dedication of the Town Hall  
 Six Horses, Banning  
 The Expressmen, Time Life Books

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

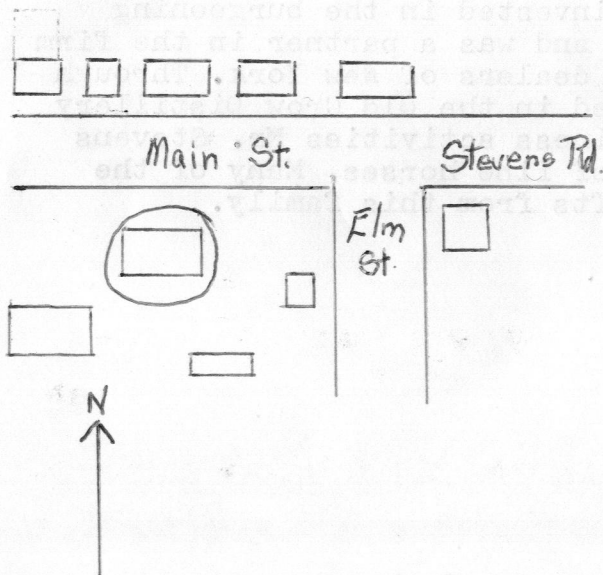
C.

Form no.

3461



4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



RECEIVED

MAR 28 1979

MASS. HIST. COMML

(over)

1. Town Swansea, Massachusetts

Address 24 Main Street

Name Stevens Mansion

Present use Frank S. Stevens Home for Boys

Present owner Frank S. Stevens Home for Boys

3. Description:

Date 1855

Source Fall River Registry of Deeds

Style Hudson River Bracketted Architecture

Exterior wall fabric Clap Board

Outbuildings (describe) Stable, bowling alley

Other features Stable & carriage house

now dining hall etc.. Bowling alley

now garages. 3 cottages added 1938.

Altered small addition Date c.1873

Moved No Date

5. Lot size:

One acre or less  Over one acre X

Approximate frontage 275' plus 90'

Approximate distance of building from street

50 feet

6. Recorded by Helen Pierce

Organization Swansea Historical Soc.

Date July 12, 1978



7. Original owner (if known) Julia A.B. Birch

Original use Residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Home for Boys

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal		Conservation		Recreation	
Agricultural	<u>X</u>	Education	<u>X</u>	Religion	
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement		Science/ invention	
The Arts		Industry		Social/ humanitarian	
Commerce		Military		Transportation	
Communication		Political			
Community development	<u>X</u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This house was erected by Julia A.B. Birch while her husband was engaged in organizing the stage business in California. Mr. Birch lost his life in the wreck of the Central America in 1857. The next year Mrs. Birch married her first husband's business partner Frank Shaw Stevens. They returned to live in Swansea permanently in 1858. A fortune had been made in the Consolidated Stage Coach lines in California and other lines. Besides carrying passengers they held lucrative mail contracts. After the sale of the Stage Coach Lines, Mr. Stevens invested in the burgeoning textile mill business in Fall River and was a partner in the firm of Paris and Allen wholesale liquor dealers of New York. Through this affiliation he became interested in the Old Crow Distillery in Kentucky. In addition to his business activities Mr. Stevens ran a large farm and was a breeder of fine horses. Many of the public buildings in Swansea were gifts from this family.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

James E. Birch, Galucci, Sacramento, 1958.  
Fall River Registry of Deeds  
Dedication of the Town Hall  
Six Horses, Banning  
The Expressmen, Time Life Books.

