

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

GOUGH, JOHN B., HOUSE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: John B. Gough House (Additional Documentation and Boundary Clarification)

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 221 Main Street

Not for publication:

City/Town: Boylston

Vicinity:

State: MA County: Worcester Code: 027

Zip Code: 01505

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Object: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

3

3

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ Entered in the National Register
- ___ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ Removed from the National Register
- ___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Work in Progress Sub:

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Mid-19th Century: Italian Villa

MATERIALS:

Foundation: brick

Walls: wood

Roof: synthetic; metal; asphalt

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

An engraving of the John B. Gough House appears in Gough's *Autobiography*, published in 1869. Located in Boylston, Massachusetts, it remains virtually identical to its appearance at the time of Gough's occupancy. It is a spacious New England frame house, painted white, two stories tall with a single-story bay on each side. The roof is hipped and both the cupola and bracketing are Italianate in style, though quite restrained. A large porch on the front of the house features octagonal columns. The shutters have been removed, but this has been the only alteration.

John Gough resided here from 1848 until 1886--the major portion of his oratorical career. He speaks fondly of the house he had built for himself and his second wife, Mary Whitcomb:

On the 22nd of August (my birthday) the corner-stone of my house was laid...It seemed a great undertaking to make a home for myself and wife. Many friends have asked why I chose a spot so far from the city, five miles from Worcester, and two miles from anywhere else. The fact is, I had become weary of city life, and longed for the country. Being pleased with this situation, I purchased twenty-six acres, built my house, and planted trees. Since that time, I have added to it, and now, I trust with a grateful heart, I sit with my friends under the shade of the tree my hand has planted.¹

Also on the property are a horse barn and a cart (carriage) house/workshop. The long axis of the barn is oriented north to south, and the main entrance is at the northern end with a central aisle continuing to the south end. There are trap doors between the entrances to the horse stalls that lead directly to the cellar and its soil floor. (Pigs housed in the cellar would root through manure that was shoveled through these trap doors to the floor below.) The walls are covered with vertical siding. The north wall is an eave end wall; in a typical New England barn it should be a gable-front wall. The only main barn gable wall is at a right angle, facing east. This gable is located high above the excavated entrance to the below-ground cellar and is a major feature of the east wall. It presents a stunning view, and it has been postulated that Mr. Gough could enjoy its church-like architecture from his yard or the west-facing house windows. However, there is a more practical reason for the deviation from typical New England barn architecture. The gable-roofed east wall would have diverted rainwater and snow melt to the north and south sides of the cellar entrance below, where most of the downflow might have been captured in carefully placed wooden barrels. (Were the eave wall to be located at this location instead, broad sheets of rainwater runoff, or a snow slide, would have hindered access to and from the basement as well as potentially cause harm to anyone attempting to enter or leave the barn.)

An eleven-pane transom window is located above the north wall barn doors. Six windows with double-hung sash and small single panes are located on the west wall where each horse stall is located. The east, south, and west walls also have a total of twelve, double-hung sash windows, six over six panes located at various points. The barn also has ten various-sized, single sash windows in various locations on the walls.

There is a ramp-like tunnel leading from the northwest corner of the cellar through a large opening in the stone foundation of the barn to a recently exposed ground-level foundation at the northwest face of the north wall. The tunnel was crafted with a lining of cement. There is evidence the tunnel was used by the pigs in the cellar to access an enclosed outdoor space.

¹ John B. Gough, *Autobiography and Personal Recollections of John B. Gough, with Twenty-Six Years Experience as a Public Speaker* (Springfield, MA: Bill, Nichols, 1869), 250.

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The second floor of the two wing-like extensions on the southeast and southwest ends of the Gough barn, were probably used as quarters for farm hands. Both are accessed by stairways within the barn. The southwest extension is a simple, unfinished space with windows and clear evidence of mortise and tendon joinery. It may have been a bunkroom or, at times, a storeroom. The southeast extension has a narrow stairway that leads directly to two adjacent but open rooms with finished inside walls. These rooms were more likely used for human habitation since by 1868 Gough employed twelve laborers to help run the farm.

The cart (carriage) house/workshop is very plain. It has ten double-hung six-over-six sash windows which are distributed on all four elevations, plus one small single sash window on the north wall of the workshop. Today, the workshop is still periodically used by a Town of Boylston employee. A tree-lined drive, leading to but outside the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark, echoes the historic designed landscape and provides a setting for the house and its outbuildings.

The estate remained as a residence and farm with little alteration until ca. 1939 when the house was remodeled into three apartments, two in the back and one in the front. The property was purchased in 1953 by the Shepherd Knapp School and the house became a faculty residence until the school closed in 1976-78. At that time, the property was purchased by the Digital Corporation for a training center.

The Hillside Restoration Project began in 1998 as a joint venture between the Boylston Historical Society and Boylston's municipal leaders. The acquisition of the property by the Town of Boylston gave impetus to a long standing desire to save, restore, and reuse the estate of the internationally-renowned nineteenth century social reformer, John B. Gough.

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

The John B. Gough House, known historically and today, as “Hillside,” was the home of the internationally-renowned nineteenth century social reformer, John Bartholomew Gough, from 1848 to 1886. For 44 years, from 1842 to 1886, John B. Gough captivated audiences all over the country through his impassioned appeals for temperance and the humorous stories interwove within his more serious message.

By 1834, there were some 5,000 temperance societies with one million persons having pledged themselves to temperance. Henry Steele Commager has called temperance “[o]ne of the most spectacular, if not one of the most effective, reform movements of this generation.”² Certainly John B. Gough stands out as one of the movement’s most spectacular reformers. Carlos Martyn believes that Gough—“the Apostle of Cold Water,” as he calls him, has never received due credit for the “sterling mental and moral facilities” which sparked his marvelous oratory, “Those who knew the great advocate of temperance found the man off the platform even more admirable than the orator on it.”³

In the late nineteenth century Gough’s name was recognized by almost everyone. He was on the cutting edge of a widespread social revolution that halved nineteenth-century alcohol consumption in America. His oratorical skills in the cause of temperance made him the most sought after speaker of his time. His fame spread through Canada and Europe, and “Hillside” became a place where all types of reformers gathered. At the time of his death in 1886 the *New York Times* wrote that he was probably better known in this country and Great Britain than any other public speaker.

Gough immigrated to New York from England at the age of 12 to seek his fortune. By 25 he was unemployed, homeless, and a confirmed drunkard. In 1842, he was invited to attend a temperance meeting in Worcester. That evening he signed a total abstinence pledge. Gough soon became “one of the most accomplished orators in America,”⁴ and an eloquent proponent of temperance for the rest of his days. “He was a whole variety troupe in one little form. In the course of an address he enacted a dozen parts, with such fidelity that the last seemed best.”⁵ Exercising a strong emotional appeal—“he held audiences breathless,”⁶ Gough set out to reform the individual rather than to effect changes in the law. According to his own estimate, he delivered more than 9,600 lectures to over 9 million people. By 1853, his fame had spread abroad, and the London Temperance League invited him to lecture in England. Gough delivered rousing sermons in England for over 2 years and later returning on two other occasions.

The whole civilized world is groaning under the awful results of intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors; a large portion of the crime, lunacy, suicides, pauperism, being caused by it.

It is worth a life-effort to save a drunkard, to lift a man from degradation.

--John B. Gough, *Sunlight and Shadow*, 1869

² Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Era of Reform, 1830-1860* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1960), 153.

³ Carlos Martyn, *John B. Gough, The Apostle of Cold Water* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1893), 318.

⁴ *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “Gough, John Bartholomew.”

⁵ Martyn, *Gough, Apostle of Cold Water*, xii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii.

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History

Born at Sandgate, Kent County, England, John Bartholomew Gough (1817-1886) emigrated to America at age 12. He worked for a time on a farm in Oneida County, New York, then went to New York City with only a half dollar in his pocket. He learned the book-binding trade and, when he was making \$3 a week, sent to England for his family to join him. Although Gough's father remained at home in order to keep collecting his pension, his mother and sister came. Gough lost his job soon after their arrival, and in the resulting financial hardships his mother died. Gough began to drink heavily. For a time he acted low comedy parts on the New York stage, then in 1839 he moved to Newburyport, Massachusetts, and opened a bindery of his own. That year he married Lucretia Fowler and had a child, but both died while Gough was off on a 10-day drunken binge. At age 25, John Gough--unemployed and homeless--became a victim of delirium tremens.

In October 1842, at the invitation of a kind stranger, Gough attended a temperance meeting at the Worcester town hall. Almost by accident he discovered a latent talent:

[T]he poor drunkard (Gough) arose when the opportunity for speaking was offered and requested that he might be heard. He was invited to the stand, where he related the sad story of his experience in a manner so touching that the great audience was overwhelmed with emotion.... At the close of his remarks, while hundreds in the audience were weeping, the pledge was passed to him ... [and] he wrote himself down a free man.⁷

This was the turning point in Gough's life. He later wrote, "I had exerted a moral power which had long remained lying by perfectly useless, and the very idea of what I had done strengthened and encouraged me."⁸ Gough twice violated his total-abstinence pledge, but both times publicly confessed his weakness and continued his temperance work.

Gough soon attracted widespread attention. In 1843, his first year as a temperance lecturer, he traveled almost 7,000 miles, gave 383 addresses, and built a reputation as one of the most accomplished orators in America. In 1853, he was invited by the London Temperance League to lecture in England, and he did so for over 2 years. He returned on a second tour in 1857 and again in 1878. Gough was thus a preeminent orator on both sides of the Atlantic.

Few individuals could compare to Gough in moral earnestness. "No sooner did he discover his peculiar talent than he consecrated it," one contemporary wrote. "He held life and opportunity to be synonyms of duty. Ability, in his view, was a sacred trust."⁹ John Gough gained his notoriety not by the force of his logic, but by his exuberant emotional appeals. He "vitalized his matter by his manner"¹⁰ and could bring an audience to laughter or to tears as he wished. Yet one biographer has conceded that "he could not coin a striking phrase,"¹¹ and Gough has indeed left few memorable sayings.

One memorable sentence Mr. Gough did utter not because of any sparkle in it, but because of its practical turn and accurate self-photography. All the events of his careers--the tragic mournfulness and failure of its opening, the moral jubilancy and triumph of its close, those

⁷ W. H. Daniel, *The Temperance Reform and Its Great Reformers* (New York: Nelson & Philips, 1878), 114.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

¹⁰ Martyn, *Gough, Apostle of Cold Water*, 325.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 323.

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five hundred thousand miles of wearisome travel, the nine thousand fervid lectures, the nine millions of eager hearers on both sides of the Atlantic--are condensed and voiced in his last and dying words: 'Keep your record clean!'¹²

Gough lectured to the last dying in Frankford, Pennsylvania, in the midst of one of his temperance tours.

The John B. Gough property in Boylston, Massachusetts, has been well preserved. It consists of a large and rather plain New England frame house with restrained Italianate details and two outbuildings, a horse barn, and a cart house. Gough lived here for the major portion of his oratorical career, from 1848 until his death in 1886.

¹² Ibid., 325.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Daniel, W. H. *The Temperance Reform and its Great Reformers*. New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1878.

Gough, John B. *Autobiography and Personal Recollections of John B. Gough, with Twenty-Six Years Experience as a Public Speaker*. Springfield, MA: Bill, Nichols, 1869.

Martyn, Carlos. *John B. Gough, The Apostle of Cold Water*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1893.

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. May 30, 1974
 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 (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	19	272910	4689700

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary lines that enclose the three historic buildings labeled A, B, and C, are as follows:

Beginning at the northeast corner of the Gough House lawn at the junction of two light-colored driveways, proceed west along this straight east-to-west driveway and near to the grass – pavement interface for 206 feet to its junction with a south-to-north driveway. Turn north and follow this straight south to north driveway close to its hardtop – grass interface for 120 feet. Turn west, cross the driveway and passing the north side of the Gough

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Horse Barn follow the east-to-west driveway for a distance of 104 feet. Turn north, cross the driveway, and continue along the interface of cut grass and the small parking lot hardtop surface for a distance of 101 feet. The tree line is nearby to the left. Turn east and follow the north edge of the parking lot for a distance of 93 feet. Turn north, toward the town of Boylston's administration building and proceed for a distance of 58 feet. Turn west and proceed for 120 feet to the tree line that is aligned north to south. Turn south, and proceed in a straight line that parallels the trees for a distance of 262 feet. Turn east, crossing the parking lot for a distance of 109 feet to the edge of the north to south driveway. Turn south following the west edge of the driveway for 104 feet. Turn east, crossing the north to south driveway and continue along the south side of the Gough House for a distance of 221 feet. Turn north, following along the west edge of the south to north driveway for a distance of 93 feet to reach the starting point at the northeast corner of the Gough House lawn.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the three remaining historic buildings, the John B. Gough House (Building A), his Horse Barn (Building B), and his Cart (Carriage) House (Building C) as shown on the accompanying map entitled "National Geographic Society Satellite Street Map: 211 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505", that have historically been part of the John Gough property known as Hillside and that maintain historic integrity.

The other buildings in proximity to the John B. Gough House are Boylston's town offices (east side), a gymnasium (west side) (Building D), and the town's police department headquarters (Building E).

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: May 2009

Placed on current nomination form and edited by: Patty Henry, Historian
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Date: August 2009

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
May 30, 1974
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND BOUNDARY CLARIFICATION
APPROVED
June 23, 2011