



Name of Property: Lydia Pinkham House
City, State: Lynn, Massachusetts
Period of Significance: 1877-1886
NHL Criteria: 1, 2
NHL Theme: V. Developing the American Economy
1. Extraction and Production
2. Distribution and Consumption
VII. Expanding Science and Technology
1. Experimentation and Invention
4. Effects on Lifestyle and Health
Previous Recognition: 2012 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: Women's History Initiative

NHL Significance:

- The Lydia Pinkham House is nationally significant for its association with Lydia Pinkham and the Lydia Pinkham Medicine Company. Patented in 1866, Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was one of the most widely-marketed patent medicines during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Throughout much of the nineteenth century, Americans relied heavily on patent medicines to treat their own illnesses as well as those of their family members. Within the complex and unregulated medical marketplace of the Victorian era, medicines such as the Lydia Pinkham Vegetable Compound were seen as highly democratic as they offered patients the ability to control and treat their own illnesses.
- The house is also significant for its association with Lydia Pinkham, the creator and marketer of Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. While patent medicines were often sold under the name of their creator, Pinkham's company broke new ground by using her image as a promotional tool, thereby ensuring that Pinkham became one of the most well-known businesswomen of her era.
- As one of the most widely known and most ubiquitous of early twentieth-century patent medicines, the Pinkham Vegetable Compound served, in part, as an impetus for the push



to reform the manufacture and sale of medications; the compound was routinely cited in the many exposés detailing the excesses and dangers of patent medicines. The 1906 Food and Drug Act, which was passed in the wake of these exposés, resulted in one of the most dramatic shifts in terms of patient expectations and treatment of illnesses during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Integrity:

- The only major changes to the house, constructed circa 1873, occurred in the 1920s. Alterations include the addition of a second story on the ell with a sunporch over the remodeled side porch, as well as the addition of an exterior chimney with interior fireplaces. Notwithstanding these changes, the house is substantially intact in terms of plan and finishes, reflecting the use of the property as a combined residence and office during the important early period of the development of the Lydia Pinkham Company.

Owner of Property: Michael and Karen Malionek

Acreeage of Property: Less than one acre.

Origins of Nomination: The nomination is being presented under the Women's History Initiative; it was written by National Historic Landmarks staff during the summer and fall of 2013.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- The Lydia E. Pinkham Vegetable Compound is among the best known patent medicines produced during the nineteenth century. Designation of this site will recognize both the complex role of patent medicine companies and the complex factors that led to the passage of the Food and Drug Act of 1906.
- Designation will highlight the important, yet often neglected, story of one of the most

important female entrepreneurs of the late nineteenth century.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments: The committee asked that the integrity statement be revised to read more clearly.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Carson moved, Dr. Allan seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 12/16/13):

Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Karen Malioneck, Lynn, Massachusetts (owner waiver received)

Brona Simon, State Historic Preservation Officer, Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, Massachusetts

Margaret Strobel, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago; Board Member and Former President, National Collaborative for Women's History Sites

The Honorable Judith F. Kennedy. Mayor of the City of Lynn, Massachusetts (HEO waiver received)

Advisory Board Recommendation: