



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

March 18, 2011

**WHEELER FAMILY FARMSTEAD, GREAT BARRINGTON, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO
THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Wheeler Family Farmstead in Great Barrington for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Wheeler Family Farmstead will help to preserve this reflection of Massachusetts’ agricultural history.”

The Wheeler Family Farmstead, 817 Main Street, was occupied by five generations of the Wheeler family, beginning in the mid-18th century. At its peak, the farm contained 130 acres extending west from the nearby Housatonic River. Today, the property is only 1.5 acres, but it includes the historic house and farm buildings that have accumulated here since the 1730s. These include the Wheeler House (ca. 1733 and ca. 1920), a late 18th-century workshop, a ca.-1820 carriage house and stable, a mid 19th-century animal shed, a ca.-1895 hay barn, and a cow house, a heifer house, and a silo, all built ca. 1910. The Wheeler House, which has been restored to its early 20th-century appearance, is distinctive for its combination of both Dutch and English framing methods, a regional feature resulting from the interplay of cultures along the New York-Massachusetts border. The property is significant for representing the full range of the agricultural history of Great Barrington, one of the town’s oldest surviving properties, and for its association with Truman Wheeler, one of the town’s early residents. Wheeler arrived in Great Barrington from Connecticut in 1764, operated a store in his house until his death in 1815, and actively engaged in local efforts in support of the Revolutionary War. The house and other historic buildings were conveyed to the Great Barrington Historical Society in 2007, and the organization intends to restore the house, stabilize the farm buildings, and present it to the public as a rare relic of Great Barrington’s agricultural past.

The Wheeler Family Farmstead is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important

historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

-End-