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The Porter-Phelps-Huntington House, on River Drive north of Hadley, is set back from the read across a wide expanse of lawn and shade trees. The homestead consists of a three-storied gambrel roofed house which faces east. An early one-and-ahalf story ell is attached to the west end of the house. From this a later ell extends to the south and includes a woodshed and chaise house; the latter is a twentieth century reconstruction of a 1795 structure. To the south of the chaise house lies a sunken garden, planted in the ruins of the stone foundation of an old barn. This barn now stands in Hadley proper, serving as a farm museum. To the north of the house lies a second garden, parts of which were laid out when the house was built.

Moses Porter began clearing the land for the Porter-Phelps-Huntington House, also known as Forty Acres, in the winter of 1752. The following spring a cellar was excavated for the ell, and on May 27 of that year the roof of the house was raised. As originally completed, the house was a S two story structure, with a pitched roof and rusticated exterior. Porter's son-in-law, Charles Phelps, was responsible for all the structural changes between 1770 and 1799, by which time the house had realized its present form. In m 1771 a kitchen ell was added to the south of the original ell. In 1782, at the time the barn was being raised, the main house was rotated on its axis, z form south to west, to face the highway which in 1752 had been only a cart track throught the meadows. This rotation would have been necessitated the removal of at least one chimney. It is unclear whether there was originally a central chimney which was taken down at this time, or whether the twin chimneys, 고 one at each gable end, have always existed. C

In 1799, several major alterations were made at Forty Acres. The entire house was sheathed in graduated clapboards. The double-leaved front door, decorated with double-cross panels, was replaced by a more contemporary paneled door, flanked by sidelights. The doorway was visually emphasized with an entrance porch, whocse full entablature and pediment are supported by Doric columns, elongated and modified. Anticipating the return of one of his sons, Charles Phelps also enlarged the house by replacing the pitched roof with a gambrel roof, thus creating a third story. This addition remains unfinished, as his son did not return to Hadley until a much later date, and then built his own house.

The fenestration of the Porter-Phelps-Huntington House is regular, as is to be expected in a Colonial house plan. Nine-on-nine sash windows in a five bay facade reflect the traditional arrangement of a central hall dividing the house symmetrically. The gambrel ends each have six windows, regularly

arranged, two to a story. The south wall has a simple doorway, topped by a rectangular transom, opening into a passage which originally led to the first ell, before the house was turned. The later kitchen all, perpendicular to the first ell, follows the architectural style of the house, with sash windows and a simple doorway.

The west facade of the house supports a verandah, an unusual feature of New England country architecture. There was an oven at the south end of this verandah, used to prepare the meals for the farm hands.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Porter-Phelphs-Huntington House is a treasury of rural life in eighteenth century Massachusetts. Begun in 1752, it was the first house constructed outside the stockaded town of Hadley and has remained nearly unchanged in appearance since 1799. The house is also a memorial to three families which were associated with it for ten generations and to three men in particular, Moses Porter, Charles Phelps and Bishop F. D. Huntington.

Moses Porter, grandson of the first child born in Hadley, built this Colonial mansion on Forty Acre Meadow. The Porter Family had held partial title to the land since Hadley was laid out in 1659, and by 1752 owned almost the entire meadow area. Because of its location, Moses Porter gave his house the name "Forty Acres," by which it is still generally known. Porter was killed in 1755, during the French and Indian War, but his wofe and daughter Elizabeth continued to live at Forty Acres.

In 1770, Elizabeth Porter married Charles Phelps, a young lawyer from Northampton, who was later to serve as Squire of Hadley under four governors. The extensive changes which Phelps made in his wife's house between 1771 and 1799 gave the Porter-Phelps-Huntington House it present appearance. In addition to his legal training, Phelps had acquired a knowledge of engineering and architecture, which explains the success of the alterations he made to the house. Yale's famous travelling president Timothy Dwight visited the house in the late 1790's and wrote of Forty Acres "...this estate is the most desirable possession, of the same kind and extent, within my knowledge."

Dwight is responsible for the Huntington connection with Forty Acres. At his suggestion, Dan Huntington, former tutor at Yale and pastor at Litchfield, Connecticut, arranged an exchange of pulpits so that he could preach at Hadley. Dwight had assured Huntington that he would be invited to visit Squire Phelps' house and added that the Squire has a lovely daughter. Dan Huntington and Elizabeth Whiting Phelps were married in 1801. Their youngest son was Frederick Dan, later to become Bishop Huntington.

Frederick Dan Huntington studied at Harvard Divinity School and then became assistant to Rev. George Putnam of Roxbury, a leading Unitarian minister. After serving as minister of the South Congregational Church, he became "Professor of Christian Morals and College Preacher" at Harvard and gained a reputation as a popular lyceum speaker. In 1861, Huntington entered the Episcopal Church. He resigned from Harvard and was immediately elected rector of Emmanuel Church, Boston. Eight years later, in 1869, Huntington was elected Bishop of Central New York.

On the death of Elizabeth Phelps Huntington in 1847, Forty Acres had passed to her children; by 1855, Frederick Dan Huntington had bought his Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. Significance (continued)

brothers and sisters' shares and held full title to the house. During his years at Harvard and at Emmaneul, Huntinton made the house his summer residence. Though as Bishop Huntinton moved his family to Syracuse, he continued to spend long vacations at the house in Hadley until his death in 1904.

Forty Acres remained in the Huntington family until it was turned over to the Porter-Phelps-Huntington Foundation in 1955, to be preserved as an historic house museum. The furnishings of the house are entirely family possessions. Most of them were bought for the house by Charles Phelps but there are also pieces representing almost every line of descent that has married into the Porter, Phelps and Huntington families. In addition, the house contains a large collection of family papers (on exhibit by appointment) which date from 1697. These include deeds, wills, bills of sale (for beaver hats, hardware and slaves), ships' papers, diaries and letters.

¹Huntington, James Lincoln, <u>Forty Acres</u> (New York: Hastings House, 1949) p. 16.

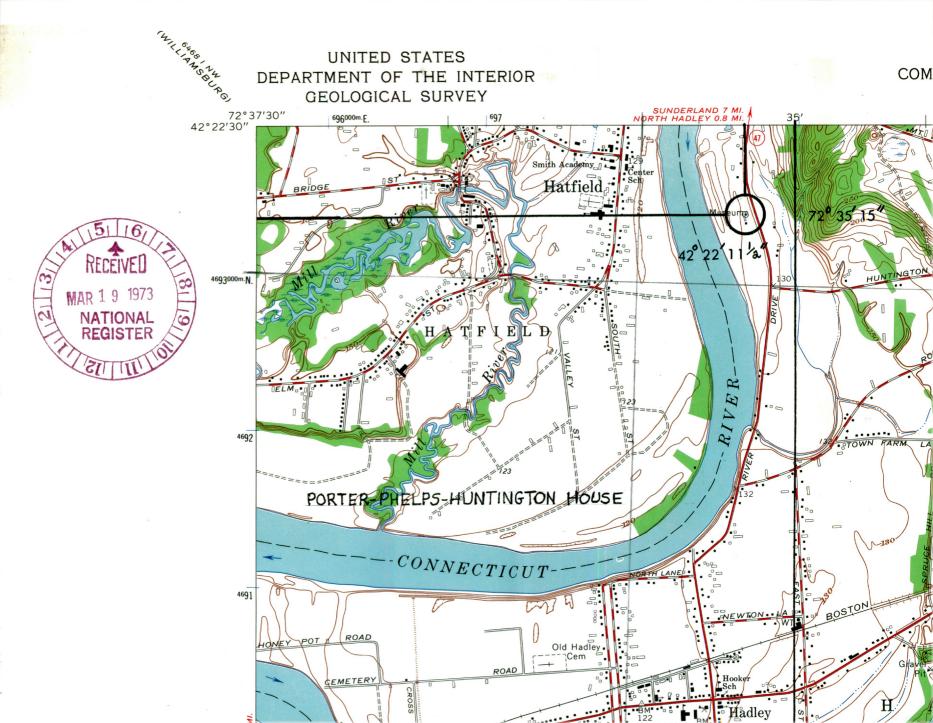


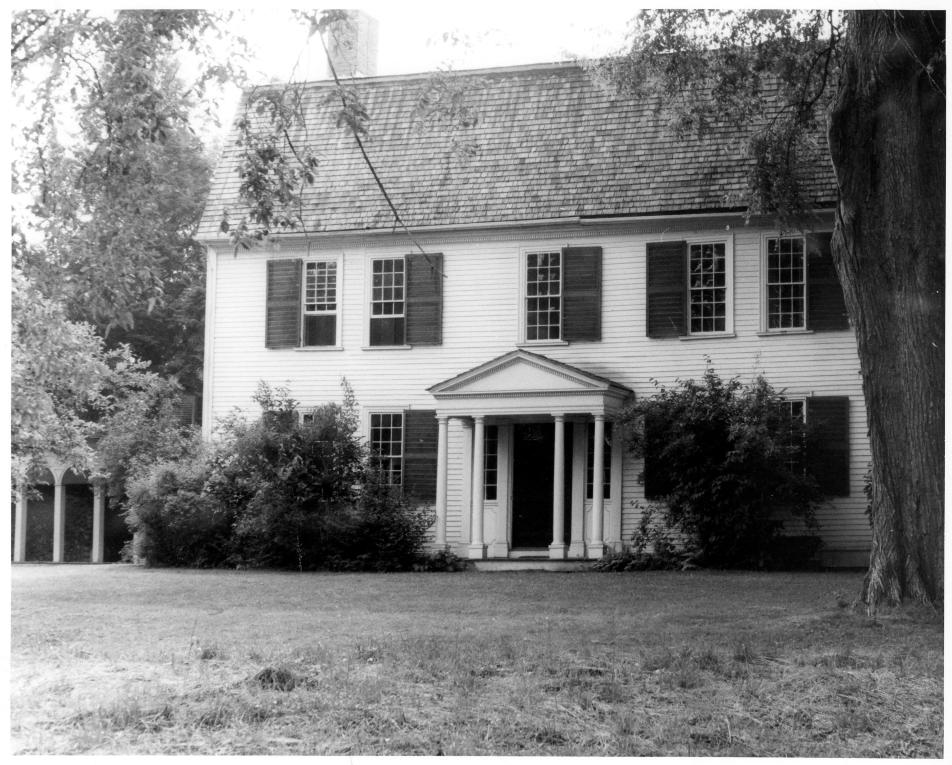
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1. View from east, front facade. (Photograph: Laurie Robin Hammel, 1970)