

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
573	V



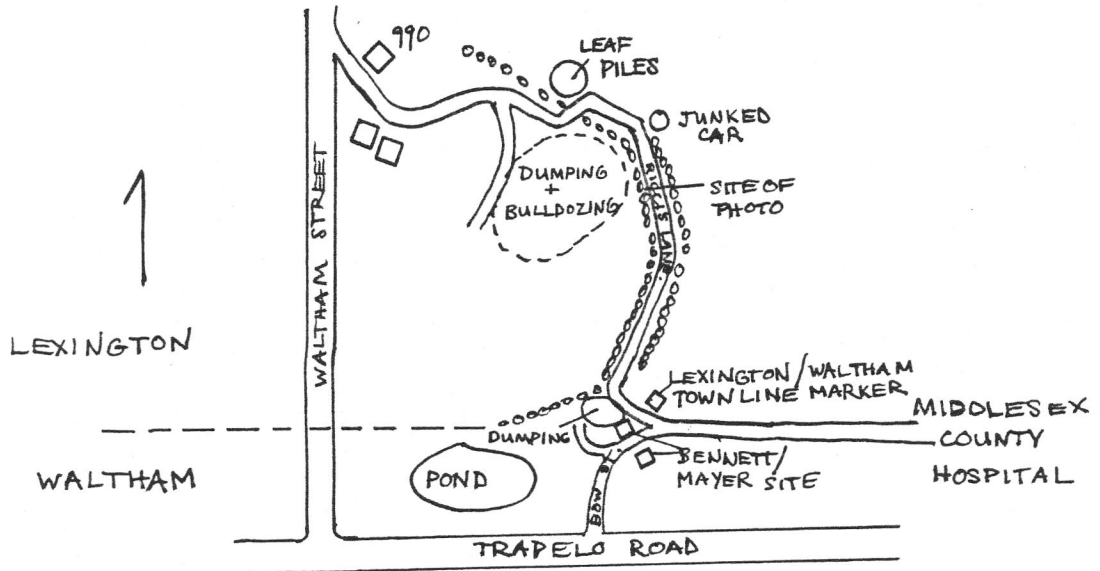
Lexington

of area (if any) Ricci's Lane

l date or period seventeenth-

teenth century

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date February, 1984

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Part of the road from Lexington to Boston in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ricci's Lane is no longer maintained as a road and most of it is overgrown or obliterated. Certain areas, however, particularly the first section running northeast from Waltham and the next section running northwest (see sketch map), preserve the historic character of a roadbed about two rods wide bordered on either side by stone walls. In addition, the area through which the road now runs is distinctly rural, just as it has always been, though with less open farmland than in the past. Foundations remain of two historic houses associated with Ricci's Lane: the ^{Bennett}/Mayer house at the intersection of Ricci's Lane and Bow Street and the Stearns/Smith/Doe house on the eastern extension of Ricci's Lane near the intersection with a road, also still discernible, that comes down from Walnut Street (see archaeological forms for these sites).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Ricci's Lane has been in existence since the seventeenth century and reflects the fact that South Lexington was the first area of the town to be settled. Ricci's Lane was laid out in 1660 as part of a road to connect Lexington, then part of Cambridge, to Boston. Until the end of the eighteenth century, a main route from Lexington to Boston went through what is now Waltham and Ricci's Lane was the connecting link between this route and two major road systems. One came from Bedford and in Lexington followed present Grove Street, Hancock Street, Waltham Street, Marrett Road (east), Stedman Road, Allen Street, Blossomcrest Street (going west; formerly Blossom Street which, until the mid 1960s, entered Waltham Street approximately where Piper Road does today), Waltham Street, Ricci's Lane, Bow Street in Waltham, and Trapelo Road. The other major road came from Concord and Lincoln. It entered Lexington on Mill Street (not shown on Lexington street maps after 1967), then went down Lincoln Street, jogged on Weston Street to Shade Street, then ran on Old Shade Street (now not maintained and the eastern end cut off by W.R. Grace property and Route 2), Cutler's Lane (present Old Shade Street on south side of Route 2), back and forth across the present Concord Avenue, down a no longer existing driveway at the corner of Concord Avenue and Waltham Street, on Waltham Street, Ricci's Lane, Bow Street, and Trapelo Road.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, bridges were built across the Charles directly to the Boston peninsula, thus permitting roads to bypass routes, such as the one from Waltham, that approached the city across Boston Neck. Ricci's Lane thus became less important as a route to Boston, though it continued to be one of the main roads between Lexington and Waltham until Waltham

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Worthen, Edwin B. 1946. A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts, 1620-1946, pp. 20, 23, 43-45. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Savings Bank.

1830 map

1852 map

1876 map

1889 map

(see Continuation Sheet)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: V
Property Name: Ricci's Lane	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Street south of Marrett Road was laid out sometime between 1830 and 1852. Thereafter, Ricci's Lane continued as a county road and was shown on maps throughout the nineteenth century and on Lexington street maps through 1955. As recently as ten years ago the road was described as a "pleasant country lane" (Gere Frick, personal communication). Today, however, the continued existence of this historic road in Lexington is threatened by recent bulldozing and dumping. The Waltham section, along Bow Street, is in relatively good condition, however, perhaps because the south end of Bow Street is still an accepted street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- 1906 map
- 1937 map
- 1955 map
- 1961 map
- 1964 map

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