

McIntosh Corner Historic District



A sample from the Noyes-Fuller floral collection

The McIntosh Corner Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989, recognizing its historic importance to the town of Needham, as well as the exceptionally good preservation of its historic character. This crossroads along the main coach routes was part of the original center of town in the 18th and 19th centuries – the location of the Parish Meeting House, the school, and especially the tavern - where news was gathered from travelers, goods were shipped and received, gossip was passed on, and town affairs were discussed. Nine historic houses, dating from 1794 to 1877, are preserved within the District, illustrating the domestic and economic life of their times. The District was named to commemorate the important role of the tavern in community life, and the many contributions of the McIntosh family to the town's life and history.

This “pocket park” within the District was named in 1913 in honor of Needham's first physician, Dr. Josiah Noyes (1801-1875). Noyes was the first trained medical doctor to practice in Needham. Noyes was also a natural scientist in the broadest sense. In addition to medicine and pharmacology, he studied theology, languages, ornithology, meteorology, botany, and geography. In addition, he organized the Needham Lyceum (a lecture and debate forum), the Needham Anti-Slavery Society, Needham's temperance efforts, was a founder of the Congregational Church in Needham, and served on the School Committee. Noyes and his protégé, Timothy Otis Fuller, made extensive collections of plants throughout Needham, and their collection is considered to be the largest collection of floral samples from New England. It has been used for studies of local climate and habitat change, revealing that more than 40 percent of local species present in the 19th century are now locally extinct or endangered.