

58 Maple Street



John Fleming House

Form Nos.	67 house, 261 shed
Area	
Town	Sherborn
Address	58 Maple Street
Assessor's Map	6/75
USGS Map	Medfield
Historic Name	John Fleming House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Ellen and Edward Fischer
" Original	John Fleming
Constructed	Main house ca. 1840, rear ell is older, shed ca. 1945
Source	Anne C. Shaughnessy - <u>A Guide to Sherborn</u> , 1974
Style/Form	Mid 19th century frame vernacular
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barn/garage constructed of rubble stone
Alterations	
Moved	No
Acreage	6.50 acres 1981, 2 acres 1999
Setting:	Large willow tree to east of house may have been propagated from the 400 sprigs reportedly brought from England. A large vegetable garden appears to the west.

Recorded June-July 1981, by Edward W. Gordon
Updated 1999, by Sanford Johnson

Film Roll/Negative Roll 6

X Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

This residence is composed of a narrow rectangular main block and rear ell. Devoid of surface embellishments, its main entrance is surrounded by narrow multi-pane sidelights and an entablature. This house may have been built by the local carpenter builder Hendrik Holden who built 39 Maple Street.

1999 Update

The house at 58 Maple Street (#67) survives as it is described on the survey form completed in 1981. A farmer's porch was added to the rear ell in the 1990s, according to the current owners.

The outbuilding on the property (#261) is a 20th century one-story building built by Edward Fischer ca. 1945. It is banked on two sides constructed largely of stone with wood-framed gables and roof. The foundation, built of mortared uncut fieldstone, was the foundation of a previous barn and rises to the eaves of the shed. Wood clapboards sheath the exterior of the side gables and asphalt shingles are on the roof. A vehicle door between two windows with hopper sash (hinged horizontally, opening inward) gives access to the interior from the principal (west) elevation. A broad, low shed dormer with three fixed 6 pane sash articulates the front slope of the roof. Secondary access is through the north gable. A stone wall retains the earth at the north side of the well-maintained shed.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

Built in 1856, this was the home of Rev. John Fleming, minister of Sherborn's First Parish Church from 1850-1853. This dwelling was built in front of an existing structure, now the step-down ell. The rubble stone garage is built on the foundation of a barn where Fleming started his willow products industry. A large willow tree to the east of the house may have been propagated from the 400 sprigs reportedly brought from England. Like 18 Maple St. this house was built straddling a brook. This brook's water was used to soften the willow shoots to make them pliable enough to weave. Baskets of all sizes, from small trinket boxes to large shipping hampers, were the Flemings main stock and trade.

Note: Maple St. is one of the towns older streets. Prior to the early 1900s it was known as "The Road to Ashland" and "Dirty Meadow Road". In the late 19th century Emerson Holden planted Vermont Maple trees along this hilly thoroughfare.

1999 Update

The English-born reverend John Fleming began his willow-ware manufacturing operation here around 1860 according to census and tax valuation information. By 1875, he had \$1000 stock in trade, presumably willow baskets, trunks, furniture and other finished goods. He was also involved in growing apples and grapes in his orchard and vineyard. Grape-growing was a rarity in Sherborn. Mr. Fleming produced willow-ware until around 1895 when it ceases to appear as a taxed item on his property.

During the period of production, he owned a barn which occupied the stone foundation that now supports a low, side-gabled shed, rebuilt around 1945 according to current assessor information. The banked foundation is of a size and material (uncut stone construction) that is comparable to other shop buildings in the region. (See 43 Goulding**, 121 Coolidge**) Owners in the 20th century include Charles Matthews, Harry Burroughs and Edward Fischer, all before 1950. Edward and Ellen Fischer occupied the house until 1982 and raised sheep on the property, an activity continued by the current owners, David and Linda Curtis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Anne C. Shaughnessy - A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- Margaret Dowse Buntin's card file
- Maps of 1857, 1875 and 1889
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1999 Update

- 1981 MHC B form from survey by Edward Gordon
- 1856 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Map; 1889 Walker Map
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- Conversation with Betsy Johnson, 1/99
- History of Middlesex County, Hurd
- Sherborn Vital Records to 1850
- Tax valuations, 1865-1945
- 1855, 1865 state censuses
- Comments of owners, David and Linda Curtis