

83 North Main Street



Moses Perry House

Form Nos.	105 house, 290 barn, 927 foundation/cellar
Area	B,G
Town	Sherborn
Address	83 North Main Street
Assessor's Map	110/23
USGS Map	Framingham
Historic Name	Moses Perry House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Willard R. Tougas
" Original	Moses Perry III
Constructed	Rear wing probably 1782, main block ca. 1810 [ca. 1872?], Barn ca. 1885, foundation/cellar ca. 1900
Source	Visual, Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
Style/Form	Federal
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barn
Alterations	
Moved	No
Acreage	2.60 acres
Setting:	Situated in vicinity of Dowse Corner - one of the few houses in the area not of the Greek Revival style.

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

Film Roll/Negative Roll 5

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

This house's rear wing is probably older than the early 19th century main block dating to ca. 1782. Its handsome rectangular main block rises 2 1/2 stories to a gable roof with short eaves. Its 5 bay central facade boasts an elegant entrance - the front door is flanked by narrow sidelights and attenuated pilasters. Surmounting the front door is an entablature and molded cornice. This house is integral to the 18th and 19th century small town character of its area.

1999 Update

The house at 83 North Main Street (**#105**) survives as it is described on the survey form completed in 1981. No major changes have been carried out since that time.

Outbuildings at 83 North Main Street include the attached barn (**#290**) and the foundation/cellar (**#927**), both located south of the house. The barn is a two-story, side-gabled form clad in wood clapboards with an asphalt shingle roof. While it is without ornament, the barn retains a great deal of design integrity due to the well-maintained exterior and the lack of alterations. The facade is pierced at the ground story by two adjacent sets of swinging doors, added in the 1990s, with simple trim. Above the larger vehicle doors is a smaller opening to give access to the second story, also plainly trimmed. Windows with 6/6 double-hung sash light the south side elevation.

South of the barn is a stone structure (**#927**) built at ground level that was originally a foundation for a barn or large shop and has been adapted for use as a cellar. Openings in the walls have been sealed with wooden doors and concrete frames. The flat roof is grown over with vegetation. Access to the depressed entry is between two stone retaining walls, possibly the remnants of a bank barn foundation.

The house, barn and cellar are located one hundred fifty feet west of North Main Street, behind a low stone wall, and are well-maintained.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

Moses Perry III was a cooper. Born in 1755, he married Mary Sanger in 1782. Presumably this house was built shortly after their marriage. Their children were born 1787-1794 so perhaps the date of construction is closer to 1787. This house was sold around 1800 to Moses Chamberlain, a tanner. He established a tannery on this property. The main block was probably built at the start of his ownership. This business and home was bought by Deacon Oliver Fisk in 1814 who continued the operation of the tannery. By 1875 a J. D. Coolidge owned this residence. At the time of the tannery's operation on this site the area between Hunting Lane and Coolidge Street along North Main Street was already something of a "manufacturing district" - edge tool makers, coffin makers, "wheel jacks" etc. lived nearby.

1999 Update

The house at 83 North Main Street was the site of leather tanning and shoe making operations from ca. 1800-1900. Moses Chamberlain owned the property in 1800 and began the tannery at that time. The owner of the house by 1814 was Oliver Fisk, who was listed as a farmer in 1855-65 censuses, although he may have operated the tannery here as a sideline. The owner by 1856 according to the Walling map is Joseph D. Coolidge, who is listed as a shoe manufacturer in censuses and operated a small shop on the property. Lowell Coolidge, possibly a relative of Joseph, owned a larger shoe manufactory a the corner of North Main and Coolidge Streets by 1865 according to tax valuations of that year. He and Joseph appear to have had some professional relationship from 1855-1895.

While Joseph was taxed for ownership of a horse and carriage through the 1870s-80s, he did not pay for a separate barn building until 1885, a date that may pertain to the existing building. No animals were kept at the property except a single horse which suggests no farming or husbandry occurred. The horses was probably used only for transportation. By 1905, the house had transferred to Joseph's daughter Elizabeth F. Coolidge. The cellar, constructed of cobblestone, dry laid fieldstone and concrete in the south side yard is not described in tax records. No other outbuildings are listed to indicate its former use.

The barn that formerly stood on the foundation was a one-story, side-gabled for clad in wood clapboards.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- Maps of 1788, 1875 and 1889

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