

123 North Main Street



Amory Babcock Jr. House

Form No.	115
Town	Sherborn
Address	123 North Main Street
Historic Name	Amory Babcock Jr. House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Gary Hawkins
" Original	Amory Babcock
Constructed	ca. 1825
Source	Dowse Genealogy
Style/Form	Federal - Greek Rev.
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barn
Alterations	Front porch is a 20th century addition
Moved	No
Acreage	1.10 acres
Setting:	Situated close to heavily traveled St in one of town's more densely settled neighborhoods.
Recorded by	Edward W. Gordon, June - July 1981

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Built ca. 1825, this house exemplifies the type of farmhouse popular in Sherborn from the early 18th century to the mid 1830s. Its main block shows evidence of Greek Revival updating - corner and fascia boards were added in the 1840s or 1850s. A front porch and an enclosed porch project from its 5 bay main facade. A two story ell abuts the south gable end. A well preserved 19th century barn is attached to the south ell.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This house has significant historical associations with the naturalist Amory Leland Babcock Jr. He was an enthusiastic collector of natural history specimens, devoting his time to forming an extensive private collection of animals from all over the world. Anne C. Shaughnessy notes that he was a direct descendant of Ebenezer Babcock who drew a house lot in Sherborn in 1696. His mother, Rebecca Dowse was the granddaughter of Eleazer Dowse Sr., the first of the Dowse family of leather dressers to settle in Sherborn in 1775. Indeed this house is on the northern edge of Dowses Corner.

At any rate, Amory Jr.* amassed a collection comprised of 1200 mounted birds, many animals and thousands of insects. Particularly fascinated by birds and butterflies, he spent the winters of 1872-73 and 1879-80 in British Guiana in search of specimens for his collection. Upon his death in 1903 his collection was given to Wellesley College. This collection was destroyed by fire in 1914. The Bacon Free Library in Natick houses a representative series of his birds and mammals. Among other things he was a professional taxidermist and had a gift for writing verse. A humorous verse entitled The Wandering Pig was long a favorite with his Dowse's Corner neighbors.

Amory L. Babcock's enthusiasm for Natural History inspired Sherborn's citizens - e.g., the collection of E.J. Smith and the South African expeditions of Alfred Hawes. (31 South Main Street).

* His parents lived with Rebeccas father James Dowse on Everett Street while this house was being built. He was born here in 1826.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Unpublished paper on A. L. Babcock Jr. in collection of the Sherborn Historical Society.
- Dowse Genealogy
- Margaret Dowse Buntins File.
- Maps of 1788, 1875 and 1888
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, 1974