

32 Pleasant Street



Joseph Twitchell House

Form No.	117
Town	Sherborn
Address	32 Pleasant Street
Historic Name	Joseph Twitchell House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Sewall Fessenden
" Original	Joseph Twitchell
Constructed	ca. 1710, possibly 1690
Source	Max Ferro, architect, says it is no earlier than 1710. Harriet Forbes says 1690.
Style/Form	Salt Box
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barn, shed, guest house
Alterations	North wing added ca. early 1800's
Moved	No
Acreage	79.89 acres
Setting:	Located in the heart of Sherborn's picturesque western farm country. Across the street are open fields.
Recorded by	Edward W. Gordon, June - July 1981

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph Twitchell house is one of half a dozen houses in Sherborn of which some part may have been built before 1700. This salt box possesses a central hall plan with one room on either side and a lean-to to the rear. Its main facade is 3 bays wide. In the center of its roof is a massive brick chimney. Its dignified Georgian front door is flanked by Doric pilasters and is surmounted by a multi-pane transom. Harriet Forbes notes that inside, the "summer beams of roughly chiseled oak, ten inches square, have beveled edges, and the framing is very heavy. The hardware is handmade, one small closet showing very simple butterfly hinges. There can be seen in the attic two sets of rafters, showing how the roof at one time was raised; the older, lower set is fastened together without a ridge pole." Abutting the salt box's western wall is a 2 story addition which was probably added in the early 19th century. The barn on this property dates to the mid 19th century and is crowned by a cupula and an old weather vane. Both house and barn have been carefully restored.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

As is so often the case in dating New England houses constructed around 1700 a structural analysis frequently points to a date of construction which is later than a date traditionally associated with a house. The architect, Max Ferro, says this dwelling could not have been built before 1710. Harriet Forbes in "Some 17th Century Houses of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, (Jan. 1939) leans toward 1690 - in that year Joseph Twitchell, owner of this property, wrote a will which mentions a house on this site. Joseph Twitchell, presumably a farmer, lived on this property until his death in 1710. The house passed to his son Joseph's family and later to Joseph's son Johnathon whose daughter Jennet apparently inherited the house in 1790. Her husband, Silas Stone of Natick, "had a facetious turn of mind, an inventive genius and an uncommon knowledge of books." Jennet lived here until her death in 1816. Her son, Royal Stone, inherited the house in 1820. During the late 19th century Charles O. Littlefield lived in this house. Subsequent owners include a Mrs. Lord and a Mr. Thomas. On the map of 1875 an A. Barber is listed as living here.

Note. Silas Stone invented a Surgical truss for hernias. His son Royal also owned a house to the south of Dr. Tays on Western Ave., since moved to Hunting Lane.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Maps of 1788, 1857, 1875 and 1889.
- Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- "Old Time New England" - Jan. 1939
- "Some 17th century Houses of Middlesex County, Ma. by Harriet Forbes