

44 South Main Street



William J. Coombs House

Form Nos.	132 house, 332 coop, 333 garage, 334 barn
Area	
Town	Sherborn
Address	44 South Main Street
Assessor's Map	11/141
USGS Map	Medfield
Historic Name	William J. Coombs House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Charles Blank
" Original	J. William Coombs
Constructed	House in 1890, barn ca. 1890, chicken coop ca. 1900, garage ca. 1930.
Source	Margaret Dowse Buntin's file
Style/Form	Late 19th century frame vernacular
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barn, henhouse
Alterations	Rear wing probably early 20th century
Moved	No
Acreage	5.19 acres
Setting:	Located close to road on well-maintained tree shaded lot, not far from Sherborn center to the North.

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

Film Roll/Negative Roll 4

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

This residence is composed of a 1 1/2 Story main block and long, rambling rear wing. In terms of massing, fenestration and surface treatments it seems more like an 1850's or 1860's cottage than a house built in 1891. Perhaps it was moved.

1999 Update

The house at 44 South Main Street (**#132**) survives as it is described on the survey form completed in 1981. No major changes have been carried out since that time.

The attached barn (**#334**) appears to have been built at the same time as the house (1891) and is connected by a long one-story ell and shed at rear of the house. The one and one-half-story, gable front form is two bays wide, pierced by a rolling door with integral pass door on the north side and a 2/2 double-hung sash on the south side of the facade. A 6/6 double-hung sash lights the gable peak. Walls are clad in wood clapboards, the roof in corrugated metal and the foundation is undetermined. Ornament includes a molded cornice, gable returns, corner boards and simple trim at the principal entry.

A one-bay garage (**#333**) clad in novelty board with a rolling door is south of the barn. A one-story, wood framed chicken coop is in the back yard (**#332**). The one-story, gable-front building has a low-pitched roof and no architectural ornament. A low stone wall separates the house, barn and shed from South main Street.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

This house was built in 1891. Its first owner was Bill Coombs, formerly of Maple Street. He married Mary Coolidge and bought much of her father's land on the west side of South Main Street. Mr. Coombs was the town's general carpenter and handyman. Although probably earning only a small weekly paycheck, he left \$50,000 to Children's Hospital "that someone-else's child might be saved." His only child died young of a terminal disease.

1999 Update

J. William (Bill) and Mary Coombs were the first owners of the house and barn at 44 South Main Street, built around 1890 according to property valuations. In the barn they kept a horse, a carriage and 2 cows. The Coombs remained in residence in the house on nine acres until around 1930, although Mr. Coombs had retired by 1915 according to resident directories.

The two bay garage was built around 1930, possibly by the subsequent owners, George and Marion Pond. They kept 250 chickens in hen houses not visible from the road, also built around 1930. The land was considered stony pasture by W.P.A. cartographers in 1939. The Ponds retained ownership until around 1976. Their daughter named Jennie Blank later lived in the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
- Not on Maps of 1857, 1875 or 1889

1999 Update

- 1981 MHC B form from survey by Edward Gordon
- 1856 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Map; 1889 Walker Map; 1939 W.P.A. Map
- 1933 County Commissioners Map of Main Street in Registry of Deeds
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, , 1974
- Conversation with Betsy Johnson, 1/99
- History of Middlesex County, Hurd
- Tax valuations, 1865-1945
- Resident directories, 1930-31