

258 South Main Street



Henry Death House

Form No.	144
Town	Sherborn
Address	258 South Main Street
Historic Name	Henry Death House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	David Forbes
" Original	Henry Death
Constructed	1775-1776
Source	Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
Style/Form	Late 18th and early 20th century framed vernacular
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barns, cottage
Alterations	Enlarged several times between 1775 and the 1920's
Moved	No
Acreage	79.00 acres
Setting:	Located on rise with fine view of the Charles River on countryside which retains much of its pre 20th century rural charm. This house's driveway once led to Death Bridge.
Recorded by	Edward W. Gordon, August 1981

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A portion of this rambling homestead dates to 1775-76. It is composed of a 2 1/2 main block and long 2 story rear wing. Its main facade's fenestration has apparently been tampered with, with only the second floor windows retaining the original size and enframements. This house possessed a handsome Greek Revival main entrance whose front door is flanked by narrow multi-pane sidelights and enhanced by simple moldings. Its interior was altered in 1920's to accommodate a resort for teachers.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The historical significance of the Henry Death House is threefold. First and foremost it occupies the site of the first Holbrook house in Sherborn. One parcel of the Holbrook Holdings was the only grant made directly to a Sherborn settler by the General Court. During the Indian Wars, this property had been spared destruction by fire, because Holbrook had generously shared the fruit of his orchard with the Indians.

Secondly it was for many years a Death or Dearth family homestead. The Deaths built the oldest portion of the present house during the Revolutionary War. Deaths had settled in Sherborn as early as the 1670's. The old bridge over the Charles which linked Sherborn with Medfield was named for the Deaths (later changed to Dearth and one branch took the name Howe.

Finally in 1925 this place was remodeled for the Teachers Federation whose members used it for a vacation resort and was widely known as Riverbank Lodge. It was reconverted to a private residence in 1940.

Note: Riverbank Lodge was the gift of Mable Davis of Washington D.C. It was established to serve as a place of recreation and rest for the "tired teachers of Massachusetts". Cora E. Bigelow of Boston's Somerset street public school was its first hostess. It had accommodations for 100 women. According to one news paper account "the lodge is a half mile from other dwellings with fruit trees in the rear and stone wall-bordered fields, skirted with maples stretching to the Charles River."

The large barn on the property was converted to an assembly hall to accommodate Teachers Federation meetings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Unlabeled newspaper clipping in The Sherborn Library file
- Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - A Guide to Sherborn and The History of Sherborn, 1974
- Maps of 1788, 1815 and 1889