

42 Washington Street



Grout Farm

Form Nos.	153 house, 356 barn, 928 silo, 929 fence Shop/"Cider mill"
Area	
Town	Sherborn
Address	42 Washington Street
Assessor's Map	7/91
USGS Map	Medfield
Historic Name	Grout Farm
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Frances Grout
" Original	Robert Grout
Constructed	House in 1859, barn ca. 1875, silo and fence ca. 1900
Source	Margaret Dowse Buntin's research
Style/Form	Mid 19th century frame vernacular
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barns and "little house"
Alterations	1930's or 1940's fire destroyed central pavilion's attic and portion of northeast wing.
Moved	No
Acreage	15.70 acres
Setting:	Ample lawn slopes from house to Washington Street, smaller house adjacent to northeast wall, barns to southwest.

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

Film Roll/Negative Roll 8

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

Composed of a T shaped main block and rear wings, the Grout homestead lost its central pavilion's roof, northeastern porch and half its northeastern wing in a 1930's or 40's fire. The southwestern wing's Italianate porch is still intact while an enclosed porch has replaced its northeastern counterpart. The central pavilion's original pair of round arched Italianate windows has been replaced by a single window.

1999 Update

Note: this house has been significantly altered since the time of the 1981 cultural resources survey. The central bay has been restored to its original height, the east bay has been rebuilt and windows have been returned to historic configurations. An 18th century barn and blacksmith shop on the property were demolished in the 1990s.

The Grout Farm on Washington Street is two and one half-story, side-gabled form with a prominent two-story projecting central gabled bay. The seven by two-bay plan is expanded at the rear (northwest) by a one-story ell and attached two-bay garage, added in the 1990s. Hipped porches flank the central bay and cover the first story of the facade. Windows are primarily 2/2 double-hung sash with beaded trim. Those in the central bay are further articulated with half-round hoods. The ground story of the bay is lit by a three-sided bay window with brackets at the molded cornice. Two entries exist on the facade. The left side of the bay has a single door lit by two tall panes. The right side has a double-leaf door, also with ornamental sash. Decorative elements consist of the bracketed, molded cornice, gable returns, jigsawn brackets supporting the porches and corner boards. Two low brick chimneys mark the ridgeline. The house is nearing the end of a major rehabilitation project that included historically sensitive window replacement, reconstruction of the roof of the central bay, addition of a garage in the rear and construction of several stone walls in the front , side and rear yards.

Several outbuildings exist on the 15 acre property, most of which are historic. The principal outbuilding is the large, two-story, gable-front barn (#356) located southwest of the house. The facade is pierced by a large vehicle door slightly off-center with pass doors at each corner. The vehicle door is lit by six fixed panes in each of the two herringbone pattern rolling doors and from above by a row of transom lights. Other sash types include 6/6 double-hung units in the facade and barn sash in the first story of the northeast elevation. A pyramidal hipped ventilator with weathervane rests atop the roofline. Decorative elements include gable returns, molded cornice and corner boards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, the walls in wood clapboards and the foundation is uncut stone.

The plan of the barn is significantly enlarged by a one-story addition to the southwest side. Clad in wood shingles with 6-pane hopper windows along its length, the addition is low in height compared to the principal mass and was built to house cows. Exposed rafter ends, a high mortared uncut stone foundation and a metal ventilator further articulate the exterior of this addition. A wood stave silo (#928) with conical roof is adjacent to the rear wall of the main component of this barn. The barn and silo are well maintained.

A barn has been constructed in the last 10 years north of the historic outbuildings. It is clad in wood clapboards, has a shed ell at the east side and a large vehicle door with transom lights above. Its form and detail are consistent with the existing buildings. A small house of undetermined age but possibly an 18th century shop or cider mill occupies the northeast corner of the front yard.

The former Grout farm is set among 15 acres of pasture divided by dry-laid stone walls, picket fences and post and rail fences (#929) (some of which were built in 1998-99). The front yard of the house is currently being developed with several low stone retaining walls, and a dammed brook which forms a small pond.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

Built in 1859, "The Grout Farm" has been the home of one family for a number of generations - it is one of the few dwellings in town still occupied by the descendants of an old Sherborn family. The Grouts came to Sherborn well before the Revolution as there were four members of the family in the war. Materials from an older house were used to build the little shop in front of the main house now converted into a dwelling. A fire in the 1930's or 40's destroyed much of this residence's original Victorian character. During the late 19th century Franklin Grout owned this property - his great grandson Robert lived here in 1981.

The one story ell on the rear of the main block is part of the original house. The "Little House" to the rear of the main house was always known as the "cider mill".

The Grouts continued in this house while the main house was being built in 1859.

NOTE: The original Grout house on this site was built in 1755 and was torn down in 1850.

1999 Update

At the time of its construction in 1859 on the site of a previous dwelling, 42 Washington Street had been the home of the Grout family since 1760. Descendants would remain here until at least 1981. Nathan and Laura Grout and their son Frank were the principal residents at the time of construction. Mr. Grout was a very successful farmer who owned over 200 acres of land and had \$3000 in the bank. He tended an orchard of 2 acres and had 10 cows; both statistics are higher than the average Sherborn farmer. Franklin Grout became the principal taxpayer on the property by 1875 and continued to operate the farm at the scale his father had established and expanded it in some areas. Under the ownership of his father, the barn had been valued at \$550. It was worth \$1600 after Franklin assumed ownership, indicating the probability of a new building during that period. That new building is probably the existing principal barn (#356), although the one-story addition had not been constructed by that time. Franklin Grout bought the house at 60 Washington Street, derelict around this time, for storage of cranberries.

Two cranberry meadows, increasing numbers of dairy cows, an additional orchard and the addition of chickens to the livestock all indicate the improvements taking place in the late 19th and early 20th century under ownership of Franklin Grout. Between 1915 and 1925, Francis Grout, the new proprietor, began paying tax on a milk room which indicates his focus on dairy production, a trend that would continue well into the 20th century. While it is not described in tax valuations, the silo (#928) was probably also built at this time judging by its wood stave construction and by the fact that an expanded dairy operation would benefit from it. Resident directories from the 1910s and 1930-31 list Mr. Grout as a farmer and milkman. By 1945, Mr. Grout was taxed for a new cow stable which probably refers to the one-story addition to the south wall of the principal barn, whose construction and ornamental exposed

rafter ends corroborate the construction date. He owned the family farm until 1981 when it transferred to his son Robert, who owned it until 1985. In a 1974 interview, Mr. Grout remembered harvesting two cranberry bogs across Washington Street into the 20th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Margaret Dowse Buntings research
- Maps of 1788, 1857, 1875 and 1888
- Joseph Blanchard's reminiscences

1999 Update

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- Resident directories, 1897, 1913, 1917, 1930, 1931
- Conversation with Betsy Johnson 12/18/98
- Tax valuations
- Vital Records of Sherborn, Massachusetts to 1850
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Hurd