

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.299
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Burnett, John Torrey House
<b>Common Name:</b>	Harrington, Herbert E. House
<b>Address:</b>	116 Main St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	
<b>Local No:</b>	52-4
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Colonial Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Secondary Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Recreation
<b>Area(s):</b>	
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asbestos Shingle Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood Foundation: Stone, Uncut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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## FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission

52-4

Marlborough

299

Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125

RECEIVED

JUL 03 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Address 116 Main StreetHistoric Name John T. Burnett HousePresent dwellingOriginal dwellingYear of Construction 1902Source deeds and tax valuationsForm Colonial/Classical RevivalArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation rubbleSiding/Trim wood clapboardRoof asbestos shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures \_\_\_\_\_

noneMajor Alterations (with dates) noneCondition excellentMoved [x]no [ ] yes Date N/AAcreage 3.68 acres

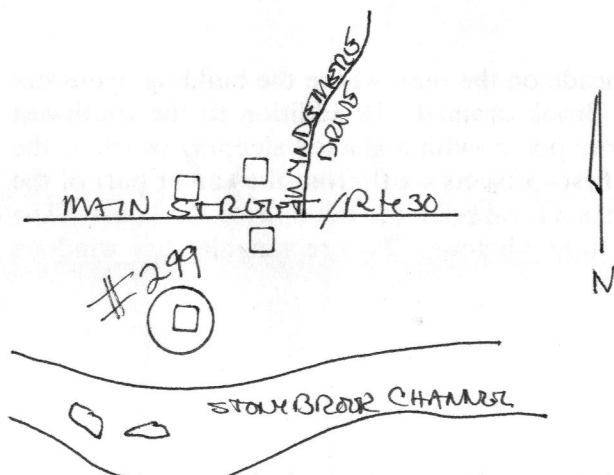
Setting S. side of Main St. on large lot backing  
up to Stony Brook channel of Wachusett Aqueduct.

Pool at rear. In area of large houses on large lots.

Photograph



inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultantsOrganization Southborough Historical CommissionDate May, 2000

## BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [ ] *see continuation sheet*

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

Like its neighbor at 130 Main Street, this country house is set back from the main road at the end of a curved drive in a manner that was fashionable in the first decade of this century. Many of what appear to be the original sugar maples lining the drive remain. An earthen-topped root cellar formerly associated with the house is located a short distance to the west, on the adjacent property at 120 Main Street.

Perhaps taking as its inspiration the overall arrangement of the much earlier Federal style house of the first owner's sister and brother-in-law at 94 Main Street (see Form #19), this is a two-story house of four distinct parts-- a long hip-roofed center section, two long flanking wings, and, attached to the end of the gable-roofed west wing, a perpendicular hip-roofed wing extending south to the rear.

The main, center part of the house is three bays long, with a high, wide, central wall gable containing a large Palladian window. Below the window is a large formal entry fronted by a grand semi-circular, flat-roofed, one-story portico with eight unfluted columns adorned with simple fluted capitals. The door is a wide nine-panel, with a crest or shield in the center. Its surround consists of leaded sidelights and fluted Ionic pilasters under a segmental-arched, paneled, denticulated entablature. To either side, at each story, is a large 8-over-2-sash window with louvered wood shutters.

The hip-roofed east wing, apparently a service wing, is set back by one bay from the front plane of the main house. Its facade is three bays long, with two 8-over-8-sash windows at both first and second stories, and a tall round-headed stair window in the center. Its two-bay east end is faced with a hip-roofed porch on four Tuscan columns, with a square-dowel balustrade and a dentiled cornice. The simple east-end entry has a glass-and-panel door with four lights over four horizontal panels, under a four-light transom, in a molded surround.

The three-bay west wing is gable-roofed, with 6-over-2-sash, and another tall, round-headed stair window located at the west part of the facade. Overlapping its rear southwest corner is a hip-roofed wing extending to the rear, south toward the brook. This wing is slightly lower in height, and has a Palladian window at the first story of its front elevation and a pair of 6/2's at the second. A small eyebrow dormer pierces the front roof plane. The south end of the wing opens into a deep, two-story open veranda with full-height Tuscan columns.

Like 130 Main Street, this house has a second major facade on the rear, where the building opens out to the landscape and the scenic view over the Stony Brook channel. In addition to the southwest verandas, a prominent gabled and pedimented two-story porch--with a glassed sleeping porch at the second story and a veranda on Tuscan columns at the first--projects south from the center part of the main house. A lattice-filled pediment at first story forms a focal point for this side of the house. The sleeping porch has been glassed-in with three-part picture windows. Two rectangular bay windows project from the rear wall of the east wing.

[x] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

116 Main Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.  
299HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [ ] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, several second- and third-generation members of Southborough's wealthier families, including Choates, Burnetts, Kidders and Gardners, built large stylish residences on some of the former farmland just outside the town center. Some of those estates were established on land that had been acquired by the town patriarch, Joseph Burnett, in the middle of the nineteenth century. This property is one of the primary examples of that important local development pattern. It was built by **John Torrey Burnett** the youngest son of Joseph and Josephine Burnett, on land that for years had belonged to his parents (see Form #21: 84 Main Street) as part of the holdings of their family trust.

John Burnett (1868-1929) married Phyllis Abbott (1888-1983) in about 1909. In the summer of 1901 he bought fifteen acres at this location from the Burnett family trust--a scenic piece of land that was 808 feet along the road, backed up to the Stony Brook channel of the Wachusett Aqueduct, and adjoined more family land to the east. When the house was completed over the next year, its nearest neighbor was the house of John Burnett's sister, Esther, and her husband George Peabody Gardner, located 575 feet to the east, at 94 Main Street (see Form #9).

By 1909 the land around the house had been reduced to 10.8 acres. The property also had a substantial stable on what is now the adjoining property at 120 Main Street, where the family kept their four horses, and had built a water tank, as well.

In the early years of the twentieth century, John Burnett was the Secretary of the Boston Elevated Railroad. As such, he may have been influential in bringing the Boston & Worcester trolley line into Southborough, as the B & W Street Railway Company designed their route to connect the El from its terminus in Brookline with the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway line in Worcester. He later became a Director and President of the family business in Boston, J. Burnett Co., which made flavorings and extracts, of which the best-known is Burnett's Vanilla, a product which is still being made today. Over the years he was a Director of many corporations, and became Chairman of the Wachusett Reservoir Commission. He also served as a Southborough Selectman. He died in 1929 at his winter residence, 100 Beacon Street, Boston.

Mrs. Burnett, however, survived him by over fifty years, outliving both of their children, as well. She apparently resided year-round in Boston after her husband's death, and in 1935 the property was sold to **Ruth W. Harrington**, and her husband **Herbert E. Harrington**. In 1944 the Harringtons bought the parcel of land to the east, enlarging the property by several acres. Like John Burnett, Mr. Harrington also served on the Board of Selectmen of Southborough.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1937 WPA maps.

The Burnett Family. (Burnett genealogy, 1991).

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

Town of Southborough: Vital Records; Tax Valuations, various dates.

Worcester County Registry of Deeds: 1687/466, 2654/134, 2911/491.



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

116 Main Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.  
299



Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community  
Southborough

Property Address  
116 Main Street

Area(s)

Form No(s).  
299

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible    ☐ Eligible only in a historic district  
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district    ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A    ☐ B    ☒ C    ☐ D

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ A    ☐ B    ☐ C    ☐ D    ☐ E    ☐ F    ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Forbes/Schuler, Consultants  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The John Burnett House is eligible individually for the National Register under Criterion C as one of Southborough's best examples of a large, hip-roofed, Colonial and Classical-Revival house of the early years of this century. It is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with the prominent Burnett family, in particular with Joseph and Josephine Burnett's youngest son, John, Secretary of the Boston Elevated Railroad, and later President of the family business in Boston, J. Burnett Co., which made flavorings and extracts, of which the best-known is Burnett's Vanilla, a product which is still being made today.

The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.