

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No: SBR.J
Historic Name: Byard - Spurr - Johnson Farm Area
Common Name: Johnson Brothers Farm
Address:
City/Town: Southborough
Village/Neighborhood: West End
Local No:
Year Constructed:
Architect(s):
Architectural Style(s):
Use(s): Agricultural; Residential District
Significance: Agriculture; Architecture; Community Planning
Area(s):
Designation(s):
Building Materials(s):



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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Massachusetts Historical Commission

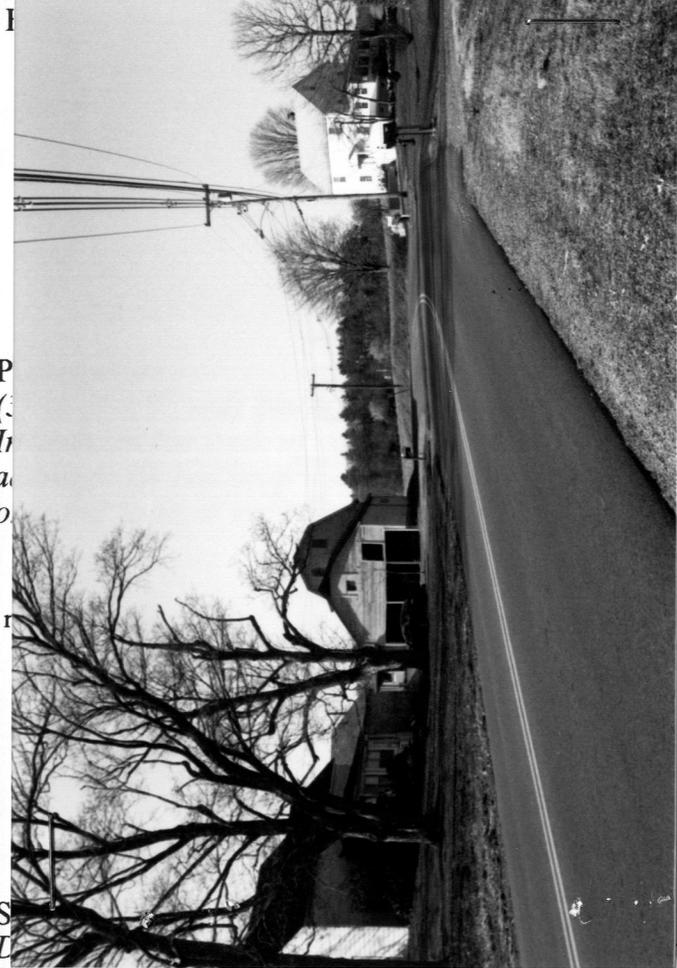
71

Marlborough

J

11, 355-357, 954

220 Morrissey Boulevard



120 + 119 Northborough Rd, looking west

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

West End

Name of Area Byard/Spurr/Johnson Farm area
Johnson Bros. Farm

Present Use agricultural, residential

Construction Dates or Period late 19th-early
20th century

Overall Condition fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations none

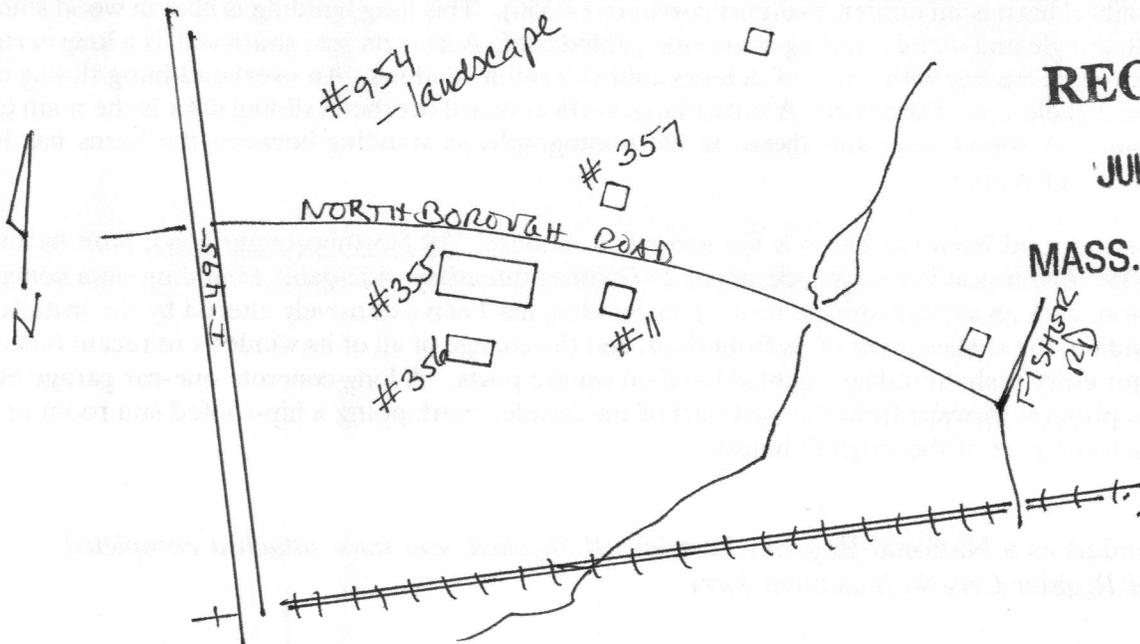
Acreage approximately 20 acres

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultants

Organization Southborough Historical
Commission

Date (month/day/year) December, 1999

it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate North.



RECEIVED

JUL 03 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

Like several other farms in Southborough, the remaining portion of the old John Byard farm, now called the Johnson Brothers Farm, consists of the main farmstead on one side of the road, two family houses built a generation apart, and several acres of pasture and hay meadow surrounding them on both sides of Northborough Road just east of Route I-495. As is also the case with other small surviving farms, however, new houses now stand close by on what was until recently part of the farm. The old railroad bed of the former Agricultural Branch Railroad forms the southern boundary of the area.

The earlier house and farm buildings are clustered close to the south side of the road at 120 Northborough Road. The later house, 119 Northborough Road, stands opposite them. The older farmhouse began as the 1 1/2-story west end--a small house with a large one-room kitchen on the first story, and two small bedrooms upstairs. The larger, two-story east portion was added at the turn of the twentieth century. That part is two rooms deep, with a two-bay main facade that has a 6-over-6-sash window on the east portion, and the main entry on the west part. The entry is sheltered by a hip-roofed hood supported on a pair of turned posts. The door is a mid-twentieth-century replacement with three small lights placed diagonally; the window, like most of the others in the house, is a recent replacement. A hip-roofed enclosed porch spans the front of the west ell. In addition to the main door and replacement windows, other alterations include an exterior brick chimney on the east gable end, and aluminum siding. The roof is asphalt shingle; the foundation is fieldstone.

Two large barns are located just west of the house. Standing closest to the road is a shingled **gambrel-roofed cow barn** (#355) of the early 1940s. It stands on a concrete foundation, and has an asphalt shingle roof. The building has the narrow "kicked" eaves typical of many built about that time, which reveal exposed rafter ends, and a characteristic hay hood with hook at the west gable peak. The west end of the barn displays centrally placed, double-leaf vertical-board hay doors at both second and third-story levels, and has a two-part sliding wagon door at the first. 6-over-6-sash windows flank the second-level hay door; one 6-pane window is located at first story, south of the main door. Ten 6-pane stanchion windows line the north elevation of the building. A shed-roofed, drop-sided addition, apparently a tie-up bay, lines the south side of the barn, with an open porch at its east end. The east end of this barn is abutted by a lower gable-roofed, shingled and drop-sided section, also with exposed rafter ends, which has an overhead-sliding vertical-board door on the north side, and three open equipment/garage bays on the east. James B. Johnson built the barn of timber felled during the 1938 hurricane, which he cut in a sawmill across the street, which stood on the site of the current house at 119 Northborough Road.

Behind the gambrel barn is an earlier, two-part **cow barn** (#356). This long building is clad in wood shingle, with an asphalt-shingle and metal standing-seam side-gabled roof. Across its rear south wall is a long vertical-board shed-roofed tie-up bay with a row of deteriorated stanchion windows. An overhead-hung sliding door occupies the west gable-end of this barn. Another large vertical-board overhead sliding door is the main entry of the north side. A round stave silo shown in old photographs as standing between the barns has been demolished in recent years.

Directly across the road from the barns is the second farmhouse, 119 Northborough Road, built by James Johnson in 1945. The house is a simply-detailed, 2 1/2-story, three-bay, side-gabled building on a concrete-block foundation, with an asphalt-shingle roof. This building has been extensively altered by the installation of aluminum siding, the replacement of its front door, and the change of all of its windows to recent 6-over-6-sash. The center entry is sheltered by a gabled hood on square posts. A long concrete one-car garage of the late 1980s-'90s projects forward from the east part of the facade, overlapping a hip-roofed sun room or den which appears to be part of the original house.

Recommended as a National Register District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

Byard/Johnson Farm

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)
J

Form Nos.
11, 355-357, 954

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Much of the utilitarian farm **landscape** (#954) of this area is intact, and serves the same purpose as it has for generations. Most of the approximately twenty remaining acres consist of open cow pastures and meadows. A short section of fieldstone wall stands southwest of the barns in the south pasture, and a narrow brook flows just to its east.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [] *see continuation sheet*

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.

The former Form #11 confuses the house at 120 Northborough Road with the much earlier Williams House at 67 Northborough Road (see Area Form L: **Stony Brook Farm**). The development of this farm, which is home to one of the few remaining cow herds in Southborough, dates to the latter part of the nineteenth century, when it was the property of **John L. Byard**.

When the Wachusett Aqueduct open channel was built by the Metropolitan Water Works in the 1890s, the west end of Northborough Road, most of which had passed south of the railroad before entering Westborough, was rerouted so that it led west from Fisher Road. Although the house at 120 Northborough Road appears to have been built new in about 1893, it is possible that it was moved from a position further to the south at that time. **John Byard**, (b. ca. 1854), like so many people in Southborough in his day, was a dairy farmer, probably supplying milk to the large Deerfoot Farm dairy. In 1894 his farm covered 50.5 acres, and he had a herd of 14 cows. Three years later he had increased the herd to 21 cows and added an ice house, but had reduced his property to 39 acres.

The farm continued at about that size for several decades, although Mr. Byard added 63 acres at other locations. He moved to Amherst for a short time in about 1914, but continued to own the property. **Harry Spurr** apparently worked the farm during Mr. Byard's absence, continuing even after the Byards' return to Southborough. He eventually acquired the property, but sold it in 1929 to the owner of the nearby farm at 67 Northborough Road, **James B. Johnson**. (See Area Form L: **Stony Brook Farm**). Mr. Johnson had one of the largest dairy operations in Southborough in the Early Modern period. Even in 1936, during the Great Depression, he had a herd of 126 cows and two bulls, which were housed on both farms. In that year Mr. Johnson owned a total of 165 acres at five locations.

The house at 119 Northborough Road was built in 1945 for one of Johnsons' sons, **Ralph Johnson**. Some land was taken for the building of I-495 in the early 1960s, but the property associated with the former farm still covers about twenty acres.

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

Maps and Atlases: 1898 (J.L. Byard); 1937 WPA maps.

Marlborough and Southborough street directories. Various dates and publishers.

Town of Southborough: Vital Records; Assessor's Reports, various dates.

Lange, Betty Johnson. Interview, 6/2000.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

Byard/Johnson Farm

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)
 J

Form Nos.
 11, 355-357, 954

AREA DATA SHEET

<u>MHC#</u>	<u>Parcel #</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Style/type</u>
11 (see B-Form)	71-6A	120 Northborough Rd.	Byard/Spurr/Johnson Hse.	late 19th C.	astylistic
355	71-6	" " "	gambrel cow barn	early 1940s	utilitarian
356	" "	" " "	side-gabled cow barn	late-19th C.	utilitarian
357	71-1A	119 Northborough Rd.	Ralph Johnson House	1945	Colonial Rev.
954	71-6, 1A	farm landscape	Byard/Johnson Farm	N/A	rural landscape

~~# 357~~

~~# 11~~



119 Northboro Rd (SBR.357).



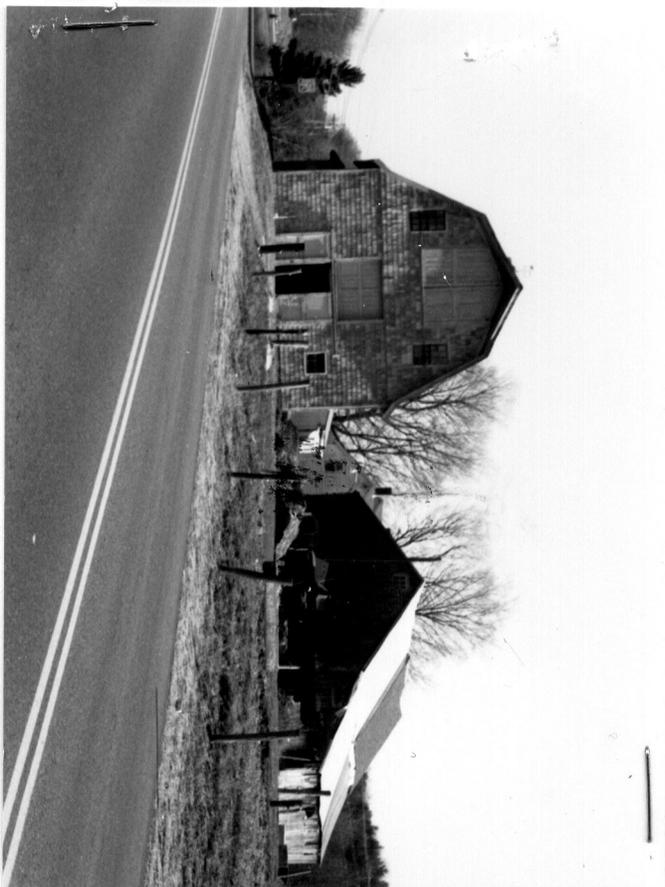
120 Northboro Rd (SBR.115).



119 + 120 Northboro Rd, view east.



Barns-120 Northboro Rd.



Barns-120 Northboro Rd, view east