

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Inventory No: | SBR.8 |
| Historic Name: | Johnson, Isaac House |
| Common Name: | Lynbrook Farm - Newton, Leander W. House |
| Address: | 35 Lynbrook Rd |
| City/Town: | Southborough |
| Village/Neighborhood: | West End |
| Local No: | 51-1 |
| Year Constructed: | |
| Architect(s): | |
| Architectural Style(s): | Georgian |
| Use(s): | Agricultural; Dairy; Orchard; Other Religious; Poultry Farm; Secondary Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House |
| Significance: | Agriculture; Architecture; Philosophy; Recreation; Religion |
| Area(s): | |
| Designation(s): | |
| Building Materials(s): | Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut |



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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
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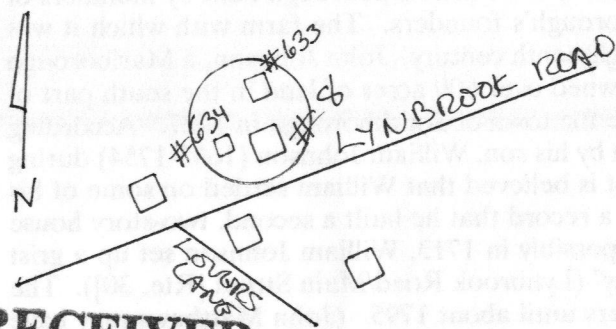
51-1

Marlborough

8, 633, 634



Draw a map of the area indicating properties within 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.

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

West EndAddress 35 Lynbrook RoadHistoric Name Isaac Johnson HouseUses: Present dwellingOriginal dwellingDate of Construction 1757Source Johnson family recordsStyle/Form GeorgianArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation graniteWall/Trim wood clapboardRoof asphaltOutbuildings/Secondary Structures 19th-C.:clapboard barn or carriage house w. att. kennel20th C.: shingle and glass greenhouseMajor Alterations (with dates) wingsand ells added--date uncertain (see text)Condition excellentMoved [x] no [] yes Date N/AAcreage 1.7 acresSetting Just W. of Stony Brook channel. Stone re-taining wall at front; fieldstone walls across and toeast. Stockade fence around W. side yard.Recorded by Erber/Schuler, consultantsOrganization Southborough Historical CommissionDate March, 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [] *see continuation sheet*

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

The oldest of the farmhouses on Lynbrook Road, this is one Southborough's best-preserved examples of a mid-eighteenth-century 2 1/2-story, side-gabled, double-pile, center-chimney house. According to some sources, it is believed to include material that dates back to the early part of the century. A complex assemblage of four wings and ells extends to the rear, including a cross-gabled, two-story wing that is four bays-long on its west wall. What appears to be a later two-story wing extends behind it, with a lower ell behind that, with its upper section extending over an open rear porch. Fronting the second of the rear wings, extending one bay beyond the rear northwest corner of the main house, is a shed-roofed, open porch. At the northeast, a one-story shed-roofed ell projects one bay east of the rear corner of the main house. This latter ell has been modernized with a multi-light glass-and-panel front door, and a sliding glass door on the east elevation.

The main house of 1757 is five by three bays, with 6-over-9-sash windows in projecting surrounds, which have a narrow molding across the top. The center entry has a door of six recessed panels under a four-light transom. Both the door and its surround are more characteristic of the late eighteenth century. The surround has flat, tapered pilasters with molded capitals extending into the frieze, and a molded cornice. The trim of the main house includes a molded, boxed cornice without returns on the gable ends, but with a bed molding across the facade. The cornerboards are narrow, and a wide water table rings the bottom of the wall.

Outbuildings. Two outbuildings stand on the property. Directly behind the house is a gable-front, late-nineteenth-century barn (#633) with a domed, louvered cupola at the center of the roof ridge, and a rear end-wall chimney. Centered on the facade is a wide blind arch with a vertical-board hay door, over a wagon opening that now has a modern overhead garage door. Attached to the west wall of the barn is a vertical-board, hip-roofed, one-story L-plan dog kennel--either a modern addition, or a renovation of an early-twentieth-century stable or garage/carriage house.

Just northwest of the house is a gable-roofed, shingle and glass greenhouse (#634) with an exterior chimney on the east side. The greenhouse may also date to the early part of this century. A third outbuilding, a long gambrel-roofed barn with a concrete-block and glass-block first story and a deteriorated corrugated metal roof, now standing on a separate parcel to the east, was apparently built by the Lindsays in the 1920s.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *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.

The **Isaac Johnson House** is believed to be the oldest of the houses in Southborough built by members of the large Johnson family, descendants of one of Southborough's founders. The farm with which it was associated dates back to at least the first decade of the eighteenth century. John Johnson, a Marlborough proprietor and patriarch of the family in Marlborough, owned over 600 acres of land in the south part of town--the area then known as Stony Brook, which became the town of Southborough in 1727. According to family records, this house stands on a 30-acre lot drawn by his son, William Johnson (1665-1754) during the third division of lands in the town of Marlborough. It is believed that William settled on some of his land in this part Stony Brook in about 1688; there is also a record that he built a second, two-story house somewhere near his first in 1712. In that same year, or possibly in 1713, William Johnson set up a grist mill on the east side of Stony Brook, north of "the highway" (Lynbrook Road/Main Street [Rte. 30]). The mill continued in operation under Johnson family members until about 1795. (John Matthews may have been a partner in the grist mill, as he later sold out an interest in it to William Ward, who sold it back to William Johnson in 1733).

[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

35 Lynbrook Road

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

Area(s)

Form No.
8, 633, 634

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

In 1739, William Johnson conveyed the ownership of both the mill and the homestead farm to his youngest son, **Isaac Johnson** (1713-1801), who had married Rachel Thomas in 1735. As was common at the time, the arrangement came with the condition that Isaac also provide for his aging parents, as well as for his invalid brother, Thomas, for the rest of their lives. Family sources explain that, when Isaac and Rachel's eldest son Isaac, Jr. (b. 1736) became old enough to operate the mill, his father gave him the older family house near the mill, and built this new one for the rest of the family, which eventually included ten children.

According to the building contract for the new house, dated 6/17/1756, the frame was to be of oak, with every piece hewn or sawn "to a square edge". The summer beams were specified to be 9 x 11 inches, the main cross timbers 10 x 12", and the sills 8 x 9." The house was completed the next year. Isaac Johnson continued to farm his land, and to work at least part-time as a miller. He also saw some military service in the early years of the French and Indian Wars, with Capt. Joseph Howe's company at Charlestown, New Hampshire, in 1746. Later in life he served twice as a Selectman, in 1761 and 1771.

Through many generations, the Johnsons were an unusually prolific and hearty family, even by colonial standards, producing large families of ten or more children, and living to advanced ages. In a manner typical of wealthier eighteenth-century rural families of the time, the older sons, in particular, were often provided with farms subdivided out of their parents' land, relocated to another part of town, or moved away from their native towns altogether to establish farms in newer communities to the west and northwest. This pattern tended to leave a younger son to manage the home farm, care for his parents, and/or inherit the homestead.

This farm, which descended through at least five more generations of the family, illustrates this pattern of succession several times over. Isaac Johnson himself was the youngest surviving son in a family of twelve children, and in the words of the local death records, he and Rachel "lived together 60 od years." Isaac died in 1801 and Rachel in 1794, long after they had apparently conveyed the homestead to their fourth son, Elisha--possibly around the time of his marriage to Abigail Newton in 1774. (The eldest son, Isaac, Jr., had moved to Spencer, where he established some new mills, and their third son, John, had already been sold or given a large adjoining property to the west, where he built the house now at 49 Lynbrook Road (see Form #7). At the time of the conveyance from his father, Elisha received the homestead and grist mill, along with 93 acres of outlands, and a third of his father's rights in other properties.

Elisha Johnson (1753-1832) continued to operate the grist mill on Stony Brook. He fought for Southborough during the Revolution, and was present at Burgoyne's surrender in 1777. He eventually had two wives and at least nine children, some of whom also received part of the family lands to settle on. He built the house at 26 Lynbrook Road (Form #9) in about 1810 for his fourth son, Elisha, Jr. (b. 1783), and, according to one family source, conveyed this homestead to his third son, **Josiah Johnson** (1782-1864), after his marriage to Sarah Bemis in 1807. When Elisha died, the homestead farm was divided between Elisha, Jr., and Josiah.

In the early nineteenth century, Josiah Johnson, along with his cousin, Webster Johnson, who by then was living next door at 49 Lynbrook Road, were among the influential leaders of the Southborough Church who, displeased with the preaching of minister Jereboam Parker, broke away from the pastor's Unitarian teachings to a more orthodox, Calvinistic theology, thus setting the stage for the separation of the old town church into two societies, and the organization into the Pilgrim Church.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

35 Lynbrook Road

Massachusetts Historical Commission
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220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.
8, 633, 634

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Beginning in 1822, a schoolteacher, Alfred Gibbs, who came out from Cambridge to teach in Southborough, began holding evening prayer meetings in the homes of John Chamberlain and both Josiah and Webster Johnson. Some dissenters, in fact, stopped attending church altogether, and came just to the prayer meetings instead. Josiah Johnson was also one of the early leaders of the local temperance movement. When in 1826 the congregations of the Orthodox and Baptist churches sponsored the first temperance lecture ever given in town, by Gen. Nathan Johnson of Hartford, it was held here in Josiah Johnson's house.

Josiah and Sarah had nine children, of whom only one of the sons, **Daniel Bemis Johnson** (b. 1813) lived past the age of twenty-one. By 1850 Daniel Johnson was the owner of the homestead, then eighty-five acres, which he ran as a moderate-sized dairy farm, with thirteen cows producing milk, 150 pounds of butter, and--unusual for Southborough--120 pounds of cheese in that year. Daniel Johnson also had a small orchard, and raised pigs for slaughter. By 1870 he is listed as owning the barn, carriage house, and a woodhouse, in addition to his dwelling.

Daniel Johnson married relatively late in life, in 1855, at the age of forty-two. His wife was Eunice Stowell, daughter of his father's second wife, Mary Stowell. They had at least four children, one of whom was born when Daniel was sixty-four. He apparently outlived his wife, however, as in 1878 he was living at the homestead with two of his sisters. He died in 1889, and the farm descended, not through his children, but through the family of his sister, Hannah, who had married **Lowell A. Newton**. The next owner of the farm was their son, **Leander W. Newton**, a Selectman for several years in the 1870s, town Tax Collector, Overseer of the Poor, and Representative from Southborough to the General Court. Mr. Newton, who also developed considerable land in the east part of the center in the 1890s, continued to run the farm as a dairy farm, with 23 cows and a bull. He also raised chickens, and by the end of the 1890s had added both a hen house and a windmill to the property.

In about 1907, he and his family moved to a smaller property on Brigham Street, and sold the old farm out of family ownership. The purchasers were the out-of-towners who had recently bought the John and Webster Johnson property at 49 Lynbrook Road, **Florence (Field) Lindsay** and her husband, **Thomas**. As was the fashion among families of extreme wealth at the turn of the century, the Lindsays were at that time establishing a "gentleman's farm" here in the west part of Southborough by buying up and combining several old farms into one. In this case, their ownership of what they called "Lynbrook Farm" actually re-consolidated parts of what had originally been one Johnson farm in the colonial era. They apparently used the Josiah and Daniel Johnson House as the home of their farm manager, and its outbuildings as the main base for their farm operations. Among their additions in the early twentieth century was the large gambrel-roofed barn that now stands in deteriorated condition on the adjoining property to the east. The Lindsays continued to operate a dairy farm on the combined property of over 100 acres into the 1940s.

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

Maps and Atlases: 1831; 1857 (J. Johnson); 1870 (DB Johnson); 1898 (LW Newton).

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.

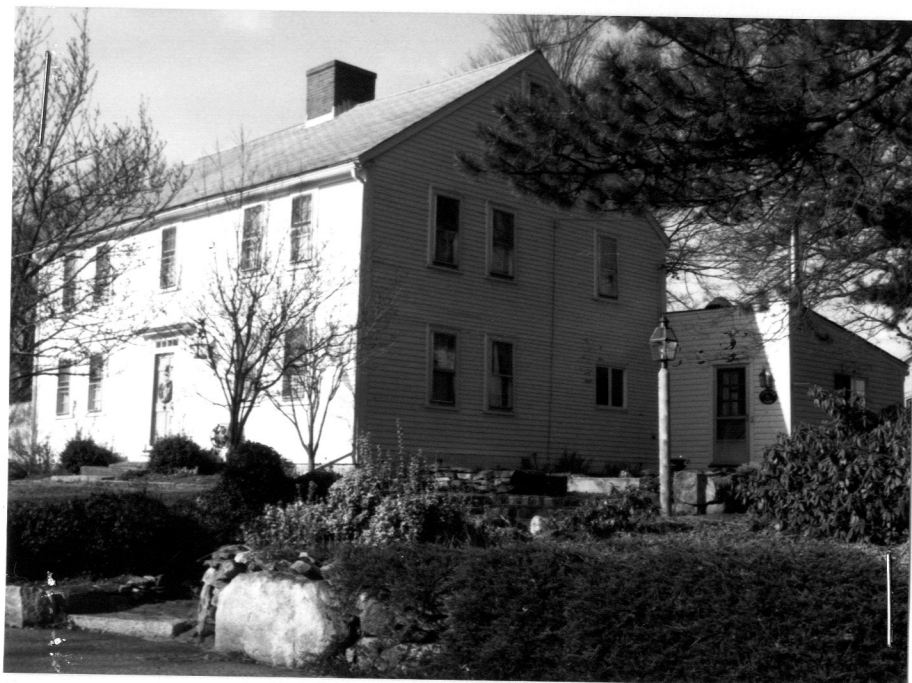
Simpson, Louise. Old Houses in Southborough. 1904.

Southborough Historical Society: Johnson family files.

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

US Census--Agricultural Schedules 1850, 1870, 1880.

Westborough, Northborough, and Southborough Directory. 1905.



Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Property Address
Southborough 35 Lynbrook Road

Area(s) Form No(s).
8; 633. 634

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 well-preserved Isaac Johnson House meets Criterion C of the National Register individually at the local level as one of the best-preserved, as well as best-documented, examples in Southborough of a mid-eighteenth-century 2 1/2-story, side-gabled, double-pile, center-chimney house.

The property is also significant under Criterion A as the oldest of the houses in Southborough built by members of the important Johnson family, descendants of one of Southborough's founders, who for generations both dominated and developed hundreds of acres of Southborough's rural "west end" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.. The farm with which it was associated dates back to at least the first decade of the eighteenth century, and is important as the home of five generations of Johnsons, including the first owner of the house, miller, soldier, Selectman and farmer Isaac Johnson.

For all the above reasons, the property is also eligible as contributing to a potential historic district composed of a trio of Johnson family houses built on one of Southborough's earliest farms, now numbered 26, 35, and 49 Lynbrook Road.

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



P10 8

| | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| USE | MAP | |
|-----|-----|--|

Town Southborough
 Street address 35 Lynnbrook Rd
 Name part of Lynnbrook Farm
 Original use dwelling
 Present use "
 Present owner Miss Marcia George
 Open to public _____
 Date Pre 1831 Style _____
Earliest house on Lynnbrook farm
 Source of date _____

Literature
Music

Indians
Development of town/city

Architect _____

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added being altered/restored

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: Granite

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard Brick Stone Other _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard _____
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Ell Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed _____

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 _____ PORTICO _____ Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Front/Side Ornament: _____

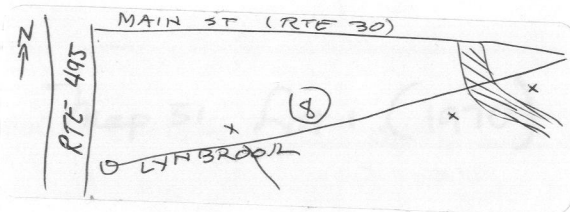
Entrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: _____

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied _____

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards _____

5. Indicate location of structure in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street
 Property has _____ feet frontage on street



Recorder _____

For _____

Photo 1971-1-7A Date _____

SEE REVERSE SIDE

RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

SBR. 8

1. Outbuildings

2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal

Predominant features

Landscape architect

3. Neighboring Structures

Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.

Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern

Use: Residential Commercial Religious

Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

Possibly once owned by Deacon Webster Johnson (?)

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

1870 map J. I. Marshall

1898 " L. W. Newton

RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner:

Deed Information: Book Number 3135 Page 158

Registry of Deeds

1970
Low. Co.