

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SBR.7
Historic Name:	Johnson, John - Johnson, Dea. Webster House
Common Name:	Lynbrook Farm - Marshall, Joseph I. House
Address:	49 Lynbrook Rd
City/Town:	Southborough
Village/Neighborhood:	West End
Local No:	50-35
Year Constructed:	c 1812
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial Revival; Federal
Use(s):	Agricultural; Dairy; Horse Or Cattle Farm; Meeting Hall; Orchard; Other Religious; Poultry Farm; Secondary Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Philosophy; Recreation; Religion
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood; Brick Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut; Stone, Uncut



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

This file was accessed on:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building

50-35

Marlborough

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Town Southborough

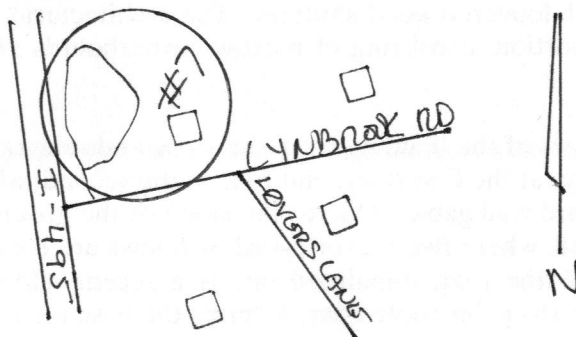
Place (neighborhood or village) _____

West EndAddress 49 Lynbrook RoadHistoric Name John Johnson House; Dea. Webster Johnson House; Lynbrook FarmUses: Present religious retreat/dwellingOriginal dwellingDate of Construction ca. 1812/1907-8Source family records; Old SouthboroughStyle/Form Federal and Federal RevivalArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite and fieldstoneWall/Trim wood clapboard with brick endsRoof asphaltOutbuildings/Secondary Structures noneMajor Alterations (with dates) Federal Revival enlargement: ca. 1908. (See text) Late-20th C: E. wing: 2nd exterior chimney on E., shed-roofed porch, wood deck at rear.Condition excellentMoved [x]no [] yes Date N/AAcreage 7.5 acresSetting Facing foot of Lovers Lane; I-495 just to west. Stone walls both sides of road; retaining wall, round-dowel fence in front w. paneled posts.

Draw a map of the area including property lines. 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.

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultantsOrganization Southborough Historical Commission

JUL 03 2000

Date March, 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [x] *see continuation sheet*

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

Although it still has the appearance of a handsome Federal style house that was simply expanded and embellished during the early-twentieth-century Federal Revival period, the ca. 1812 John and Webster Johnson House actually underwent a radical transformation in 1907-08. Late-nineteenth-century photographs indicate that it began as a large 2 1/2-story, five- by three-bay hip-roofed building with paired interior chimneys rising from what may have been brick end walls. By the late 1800s under John Marshall's ownership, the building had a long two-story, side-gabled northeast wing with its own front porch. A structural inspection will be necessary to determine just which parts of the house may have been retained during the 1907-08 renovations.

In any case, in the early twentieth century the house was at least doubled in size, becoming a five-part, nearly symmetrical building, generally U-shaped in plan, consisting of a five-bay center section flanked by two large, two-part wings. The main roof was built or changed to a side-gable configuration, with brick parapet walls, each incorporating two large chimneys. (The present roof balustrade running along the front slope just below the main ridge may date to about the same time, or be a later addition.) Each wing is composed of a two-story front, two-bay, hip-roofed section stepped back by one bay from the front of the main house, with its roof line slightly lower than the main roof, plus a long two-story hip-roofed section extending to the rear. The facades of the outer, rear parts of the wings are set two-bays back from the facades of the front sections. The fact that the foundation material of the long outer wings is fieldstone, while that of the inner parts of the wings is granite block, like the main house, suggests that those rear sections may have been added at a later date.

The main house has a center entry in formal vestibule topped with a spindle balustrade and adorned with what is probably Southborough's most elaborate entablature. Its molded cornice has shallow modillions; below it is a course of dentils, a frieze decorated with raised design of a continuous circular motif, and an architrave with a row of mutules. The front part of the entablature projects forward, and is supported on fluted Doric columns. The outer corners of the entablature curve back to meet the vestibule facade, where a pair of double pilasters, with raised panels between, flank a nine-panel door with three glass lights across the top. Other adornment on this part of the house consists of narrow cornerboards, and a large-scale classical cornice at the roof line, embellished with modillions, triglyphs, and mutules. The windows are 6-over-6-sash in molded surrounds, with wooden louvered shutters. In each brick parapet wall between the end chimneys is an elaborate, divided-light lunette.

The facades of the inner parts of the wings each have two 6-over-6-sash windows at the second story, and a large tripartite arrangement of multiple-light French doors at the first. A wide, flush-boarded gabled wall dormer rises through the front cornice on each front wall of the outer wings--the east one has a 6-over-6-sash window, the west one has a tripartite window with center 6/6. Below them at the first story are two 6-over-6's. The windows of the wings are also fitted with louvered wood shutters. The architectural trim of the wings is much simpler than that of the center portion, consisting of narrow cornerboards and a molded, boxed cornice.

While the front of the house is a study in symmetry, views of the building from the sides and rear reveal more variation. The east wall of the east wing is five bays at the first story, and four at the second, where all four windows meet the cornice line under a flushboard wall gable. Due to the slope of the ground, a full story is exposed here in the fieldstone basement wall, where five 6-over-6-sash windows are located. Two large exterior chimneys rise up the this east wall--the rear, unpainted one is a recent addition. Projecting along the west, inner wall of this wing is a one-story flat-roofed bay, forming the base for a roof balcony with a Chinese-inspired balustrade.

[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

49 Lynbrook Road

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

Area(s)

Form No.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

The west wing also has a row of gabled wall dormers along the second story of its outer wall, and one on its inner, east wall. This wing ends in a two-story porch combination, composed of a glassed and Chinese-balustraded sleeping porch at the second story, and an open porch supported on Tuscan columns at the first.

The focal point of the rear of the building is the mid-section of the main house, where the center part of a three-bay composition is a large multi-paned Palladian window over a glass-and-panel door in a surround of recessed-panel pilasters under a fluted and diamond-adorned frieze. This door opens onto a raised flagstone terrace, from which curving granite steps descend to what was once a garden area designed by a landscape architect. Landscaping commissioned by the Lindsays included a path around the picturesque pond just west of the house (now severely cropped by the I-495 corridor). Some tall hemlocks at the rear of the back yard, and many venerable rhododendrons on the property may remain from that landscape design. Portions of the round-dowel picket fence with paneled posts at the front of the property may be even earlier, however, as the fence is similar to one shown in the pre-renovation photograph.

Interior. The 1907-08 house renovation for Thomas and Florence Lindsay included large rooms for the family, and a broad central entry hall with two reception areas. A wide stair rises against the back of the hall, lit by the Palladian window. The French doors of the front of the west wing light a large sun room with a tile floor and a Federal Revival fireplace. Behind the sunroom in the outer west wing is a large library with dark wood wall paneling and another elaborate Federal Revival fireplace surround. The inner part of the east wing contains the dining room, while the outer east wing houses the kitchen at the first story, and servants' quarters at the second. Highlights of the rest of the second story include a master suite with two dressing rooms and generous linen closets in the west wing, and, in the main house, both a nursery and a governess's bedroom.

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.

49 Lynbrook Road has been one of Southborough's most significant rural properties at many periods in its nearly 200-year history--as the home of Revolutionary War veteran John Johnson, of his son, farmer and Deacon Webster Johnson in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; of Joseph Marshall and his son, Alba, through the early years of this century; and as the country estate of Thomas and Florence Field Lindsay through the 1940s.

Although by some accounts the core of the house was built for Revolutionary War veteran **John Johnson** in about 1833, he died in that year at the age of eighty-four--not a likely time for the building of a new house. According to family sources, he built it at least two decades earlier, in 1812--a date which is corroborated by Assessor's Records of 1816, when he is listed as paying the highest real estate tax in the west part of Southborough. In 1801, both John (b. 1748) and his brother, Elisha, (b. 1753), had inherited a good portion of the land that had come down through their father, Isaac, from their grandfather, William Johnson, one of Southborough's original settlers. Elisha lived in their father's homestead at 35 Lynbrook Road (see Form #8), and John received 58 acres of outlands, a third of his father's other rights, and "30 acres on the west side of the home lot, with dwelling house and barn. . ." (That house, called by the townspeople "the old red house", was a small cottage that was eventually torn down in the late nineteenth century). By about 1810, Elisha had built a house for his son, Elisha, Jr. at 26 Lynbrook Road (Form #9), while another son, Josiah, was living with his young family at #35.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Southborough

49 Lynbrook Road

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

John Johnson, however, having taken as his second wife Lydia Goodnow of Sudbury, a woman twenty-two years his junior, still had young children at home in 1812, when, according to family records, he built the large hip-roofed Federal farmhouse here. When he died in 1833, the house and farm were inherited by the youngest son of his twelve children, **Webster Johnson**, (b. 1793). He had married Susannah Harrington of Westborough in 1823. The building is best known today for its connection with Webster Johnson, one of the town's most respected Deacons of the Pilgrim Church. In the mid-nineteenth-century his was the third-largest farm in Southborough--a spread of nearly 200 acres with a valuation that for many years was the fourth highest in town. By 1850 he also tied the wealthiest farmer, Peter Fay, for the largest dairy herd in Southborough at that time--over two dozen cows. He grew the usual mix of corn, rye, hay, and potatoes to feed them, but also had a small orchard, and several acres planted in peas, beans, and other market crops.

Webster Johnson, along with his cousin, Josiah, were among the influential leaders of the Southborough Church who, displeased with the teachings of town minister Jereboam Parker, steered it away from the pastor's Unitarian theology to a more Calvinistic direction, thus setting the stage for the separation of the old town church into two societies, and the organization of the Pilgrim Church. 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, and came just to the prayer meetings instead.

Webster and Susannah had eight children. Of their five daughters, four--Susan, Eleanor, Hannah, and Sally-- grew up to teach school nearby at the District #6 School on Northborough Road, the "West End School." Shortly after the Civil War, Dea. Johnson left Southborough, and moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

In 1867, he sold the farm to **Moses Marshall**, who either willed or conveyed it to his son, **Joseph I. Marshall**, by 1870. Joseph Marshall was one of the major farmers of late-nineteenth-century Southborough. Under his ownership, the farm was 125 acres. He enlarged the house, and replaced or greatly enlarged the barn. In 1870 he also had a hog house, a granary, and a carriage house.

By the end of the century, Mr. Marshall was sharing the management of the farm with his son, **Alba J. Marshall**, who added a flock of 150 fowl to the livestock by 1897. An additional stable was built on the property in about 1900.

Joseph Marshall died in 1902 at the age of seventy-five, and, while his widow, Vilona, survived him, the ownership of the farm apparently passed to Alba. In 1907, however, Alba sold the property to **Thomas P. and Florence (Field) Lindsay**. Mrs. Lindsay was the granddaughter of Marshall Field, owner of the well-known Chicago department store, and the farm was apparently given to the young couple as a wedding present by her father or grandfather, who paid to have it updated and renovated into a lavish Federal-Revival "gentleman's farm" and country estate. At about the same time the Lindsays also acquired the adjoining property at 35 Lynbrook Road, combining the whole into a 192-acre estate they called "Lynbrook Farm." (cont.)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

49 Lynbrook Road

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Area(s)

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

The Lindsays raised cows, horses, and chickens on their farm. They used 35 Lynbrook as the home of their farm manager, and its outbuildings as the main base for their farm operations. They also continued to use the Marshall barn and stable (no longer extant) for a time, adding new outbuildings of their own over the next several years. As late as 1927 their property was spread over 185 acres, with four houses, several stables and barns, and a small office. At that time they had 55 cows and three bulls. By 1936 they owned 235 acres.

In 1948, Mrs. Lindsay sold the property. In 1961, a portion immediately west of the house was taken for Interstate 495, a new section of Route 30 was built to the north, and the old line of the Northborough Road (Main Street) was discontinued, becoming two dead-end streets--Lynbrook Road east of Route 495, and Granuaile Road to the west. About 1980, the property around the house was purchased by L'Abri, a non-profit organization for independent Christian study that had been founded in the 1950s by a group of Americans in Switzerland. Since that time it has been used as a retreat. Its spacious Federal Revival interior is used for meeting rooms and living quarters for those coming to study, and includes a tenants' apartment in the east wing.

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

Maps and Atlases: 1831; 1857 (W. Johnson); 1870 (JI Marshall); 1898 (JI Marshall & Son).

Interview with tenant, 12/99.

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

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

Old Southborough: a Photographic Essay. Southborough Historical Society, 1981.

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.



Rear



Rear



West wing, rear



East wall



Rear

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Property Address
Southborough 49 Lynbrook Road

Area(s) Form No(s).
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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 Johnson House/Lynbrook Farm meets Criterion C of the National Register individually at the local level as a well-preserved illustration of an important Federal style house enlarged and updated to the Federal Revival style in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The property is also significant for many reasons under Criterion A--as the home of Revolutionary War veteran John Johnson, of his son, farmer and Deacon Webster Johnson in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; of important late-nineteenth-century farmer Joseph Marshall and his son, Alba, through the early years of this century; and as the country estate of Thomas and Florence Field Lindsay through the 1940s.

For the above reasons, the property is also eligible as contributing to a potential historic district composed of a trio of houses, now numbered 26, 35, and 49 Lynbrook Road, built by members of the important Johnson family, who for generations both dominated and developed hundreds of acres of Southborough's rural "west end" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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



PL 6 3 7

363	BRILL	
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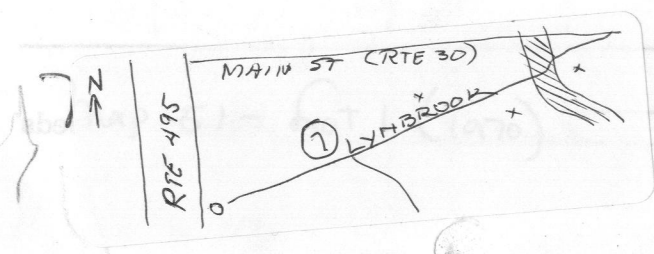
Town Southborough
Street address 49 Lynbrook Rd.
Name Lynbrook Farm
Original use Dwelling
Present use "
Present owner Miss Marcia George
Open to public _____
Date 19th Style _____
Source of date Pre-1831 (from map)

Literature Music Indians Development of town/city Architect _____
3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: _____
WALL COVER: Wood Clapboards Brick Stone Other _____
ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard mixed hip basically
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____
CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 7 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: pillared porch with balustrade
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 1-64 1971 Date 1971

SEE REVERSE SIDE

RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

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)

Once an original Johnson house. Present owner has a Johnson history including references to the house — has not been able to locate sd. history
 Oldest part of the house is the east end

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

1870 map J. I. Marshall
 1898 " " " and son
 April 1, 1907 Alba J. Marshall 1851-5
 Nov 1 1948 Florence F. Lindsay 3155-158

RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner: _____
 Deed Information: Book Number 3188 Page 158, Mar. 1907 Registry of Deeds