

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SBR.L
Historic Name:	Williams, James Farm
Common Name:	Stony Brook 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; Archaeology, Historic; 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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FORM A - AREA

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
B

Assessor's Sheets

61, 62

USGS Quad

Marlborough

Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

L

369-377; 955

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

Northboro Rd, looking west to #67

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

West End

Name of Area Stony Brook Farm

Present Use agricultural, residential

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

Overall Condition fair to good

Major Intrusions and Alterations SE ell of 67

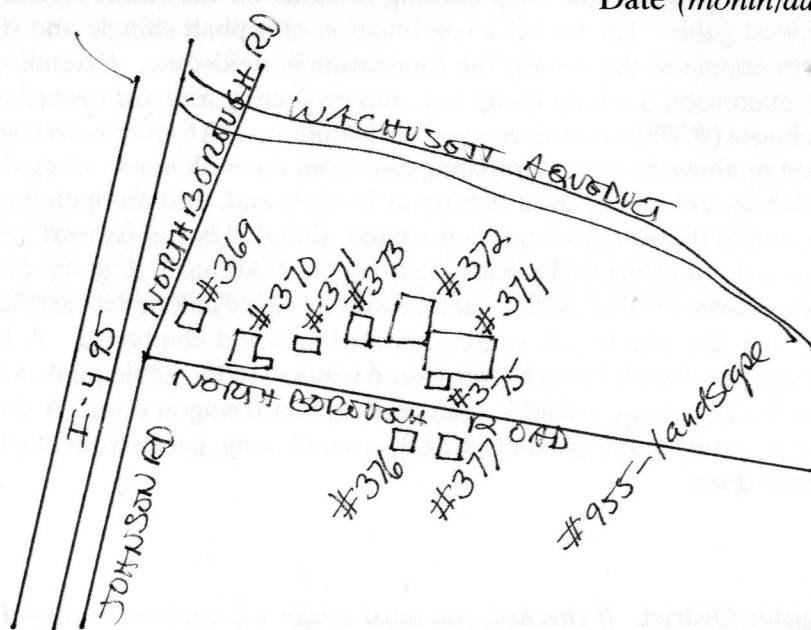
Northborough Rd. & major portion of its barn
demolished late 20th C.

Acreage approximately 18.5 acres

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultants

Organization Southborough Historical
Commission

Date (month/day/year) December, 1999



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JUL 03 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form

AREA FORM

SBR.L

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☒ see continuation sheet

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

Like many small central Massachusetts farms, the remaining portion of the old **James Williams Farm**, in this century called **Stony Brook Farm**, consists of the main farmstead flanking both sides of the road, two family houses built generations apart, and several acres of hay meadow surrounding them. The area, which covers about 18.5 acres, abuts the picturesque, pine-tree lined Wachusett Aqueduct open channel on the north (NR), fronts the I-495 corridor directly across Northborough and Johnson Roads to the west, and is bordered by a newly-developed area of large residences on the south.

The farm buildings are clustered near the intersection of Northborough and Johnson Roads. The main section of the farmhouse, 67 Northborough Road, is its later part--a simply detailed late-nineteenth-century 2 1/2-story, one-room-deep, side-gabled house built about 1866, with a two-story rear wing (raised from one story after 1901), a west-end entry ell, and an early-twentieth-century hip-roofed enclosed porch across the facade. The front of the house is arranged asymmetrically, with three bays of 6-over-6-sash windows, and a modern replacement glass-and-panel door in the middle bay. Most of the other windows in the house are also 6-over-6-sash. The building has a molded, boxed cornice at the roofline, which projects at the gable ends. Cornerboards may have been lost or covered when the present asbestos siding was put on. The roof is asphalt shingle; the foundation is not visible. Attached to the east end of the house is the oldest part of the building--a 1 1/2-story house, possibly dating to the early nineteenth century, its gable-end facing the street. This section is windowless on the east elevation, and has two bays on the south facade with large 6-over-6-sash at the first story, smaller 6/6's above them, and a 6-over-9-sash window in the gable peak. The trim is astylistic, and the roof does not overhang the gable ends. An even earlier section, a long 1-story ell (or former house) extending to the southeast, was removed in about 1985.

The farm outbuildings are located east of the house, facing each other on both sides of the road. Just east of the house is a twentieth-century vertical-board, gable-front **equipment shed** (#371), open on the front, with an asphalt shingle roof and a fieldstone foundation.

East of the shed is a large, somewhat deteriorated barn complex of several contiguous sections. Its core is a large, high gable-roofed **cow barn** (#374), which stands with its long side to the road. Until 1996, this was one of the largest, and possibly the largest, privately-owned barns in Southborough--three times as long as it is today. In that year an eleven-bay section with a monitor roof was demolished. Most of the building's cladding is vertical-board, but considerable clapboarding remains on the south elevation, and some novelty siding appears in the west gable. The roof is a combination of asphalt shingle and standing-seam metal, and has a small modern cupola in the center; the foundation is fieldstone. Extending to the rear, under the continuation of the main roof, is a long tie-up bay, and projecting forward toward the road from the southwest corner is a **milk house** (#375)--a small cross-gabled building with 6-over-6-sash windows, which formerly had a large cistern on or above its roof. Stretching east from the milk house along the south wall of the barn is a shed roof, which covers an enclosed section at its west end, and an open bay on the east. The main door of the barn is in a shallow-projecting, shed-roofed, shingled bay at its west gable end. The main wagon door has been replaced. Abutting to the northwest corner of this barn, its gable-end facing the road, is another long, narrow **horse barn** (#372), with a shed-roofed tie-up bay along its east side. This building, which appears to date to the late nineteenth century, is clad in wood clapboard. A louvered square cupola rises from the roof ridge. Its facade has a 6-over-6-sash window in the gable peak, a vertical-board hay door just below it, and at the first story, a double-leaf, vertical-board wagon door. A short shed roof extends north from this section to connect to a **granary** (#373)--a small, long, gable-front clapboarded building, with a vertical-board facade door.

[x] 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

Stony Brook Farm

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)
L

Form Nos.
369-377; 955

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Across the street from this complex are two small free-standing gable-roofed outbuildings, both of which present their long sides to the road. The westernmost is a two-story vertical-board **granary** (#376), which was listed in tax records as early as 1870. Wagons entered the high fieldstone lower story, where they were loaded from chutes descending from the upper story. In the upper wall are two 6-pane windows. An earthen and fieldstone ramp rises to the upper story at the west end of this building. Standing close by to the east is a smaller building, used as a **tool room** (#377) for repairing farm equipment. This building, which also stands on a fieldstone foundation, was moved from Marlborough in the early 1930s. It is nearly windowless except for a 4-pane window in the west end, is clad in a combination of novelty siding and tar paper, and has an asphalt shingle roof. Directly behind these two buildings are the ruins of another small outbuilding.

The second house on the farm, which faces west at the corner where Northborough Road turns north, is 75 Northborough Road--a side-gabled 1 1/2-story house built in 1942. Its form is dominated by the steeply-pitched main roof, and by the wide front and rear shed-roofed dormers which sweep down from the main ridge. The house is clad in aluminum siding, has an asphalt shingle roof, and stands on a rusticated concrete-block foundation. Most of the windows are replacement 6-over-6-sash. A facade-width front porch, now enclosed, has modern casement windows. Although the architectural trim is covered with siding, the Colonial Revival lines of a boxed cornice, with gable-end returns, are still evident. A late-20th-century two-car garage stands just southeast of the house.

Most of the approximately 18 1/2 remaining acres of this old farm consist of a reduced agricultural **landscape** (#955) of open hay meadows--flat along the north side of the road, rising to a low southeast hill on the south side of the road.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

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

This area abutting the I-495 corridor is today one of the last of Southborough's rapidly vanishing working farms. Its main product appears to be hay, which is grown on the long fields extending to the southeast on both sides of Northborough Road. The house owned in the middle of the nineteenth century by farmer **James Williams**, which was standing by 1831, included the small Cape Cod cottage that forms the east ell of the house at 67 Northborough Road.

According to census information, Mr. Williams' farm was seventy acres in 1850, and seventy-nine by 1870. (Local tax records, however, list it as fifty-three acres in that year.) He was primarily a dairy farmer, with a herd of nearly a dozen cows. His specialty appears to have been the production of butter. In 1860 he produced 700 pounds, and in 1870 300 pounds--still three times that of most of the farmers in the vicinity. He grew more Indian corn to feed his livestock than most of his neighbors, and also had sizable crops of potatoes and apples. In addition to the main farmhouse and another small house to the east (demolished), the other buildings on the farmstead were referred to in that year as a barn, a granary, and a hog house. (Cont.)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

Stony Brook Farm

Massachusetts Historical Commission
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Area(s)
L

Form Nos.
369-377; 955

HISTORIC NARRATIVE, cont.

After James Williams' death in 1882, the farm passed to his daughter, **Henrietta**, and her husband, **Addison Fay Johnson** (1837-1907), son of Nathan L. Johnson of Sears Road (see Area Form O: Wolf Pen Farm), and a member of the large Johnson family who had farmed in the west and north part of Southborough for many generations. They had been married in 1866, and built most of the large west end of the farmhouse for their residence at that time. Their farm was 48 acres at the turn of the century, with a herd of seventeen cows.

Henrietta Johnson died in 1896, and her husband retired to a smaller property on Marlborough Road. By 1904 the property belonged to the Johnsons' son, **James B. Johnson** (1876-1963), who enlarged the farm and the barn to accommodate what became one of the largest dairy operations in Southborough in the early part of the twentieth century. Even in 1936, during the Great Depression, he had a herd of 126 cows and two bulls. His livestock were housed both here and at a second farm at 120 Northborough Road, which he acquired in 1929 (see Area Form J). By 1936 Mr. Johnson owned a total of 165 acres at five locations.

The house at 75 Northborough Road was built in 1942 for James Johnson's son, **Norman Johnson**, who became the owner of the farm after his father's death. The property has been reduced to 18.5 acres since then.

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

Maps and Atlases: 1831; 1857, 1870 (J. Williams); 1898 (AE Johnson); 1937 WPA maps.

Lange, Betty Johnson. Interview, 6/2000.

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

Southborough Historical Society: photograph collection; family files.

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

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Property Address
Southborough Stony Brook Farm

Area(s) Form No(s).
L (see data sheet)

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 complex of buildings, structures, and agricultural landscape remaining from the Stony Brook Farm is eligible for the National Register as a district at the local level under Criterion A as the surviving manifestation of a prominent West End farm that evolved from the early nineteenth-century Williams farm to the largest family-owned dairy farm in Southborough under James B. Johnson in the early part of the twentieth century.

The property also meets Criterion C as a well-preserved collection of architectural and agricultural resources that illustrate the design and architecture of a local dairy farm complete with an array of both major and minor outbuildings, and houses that reflect the ownership and occupation of at least four generations of owners from the same family.

Though reduced to about 18 acres, the property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

Stony Brook Farm

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
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Area(s)
L

Form Nos.
369-377; 955

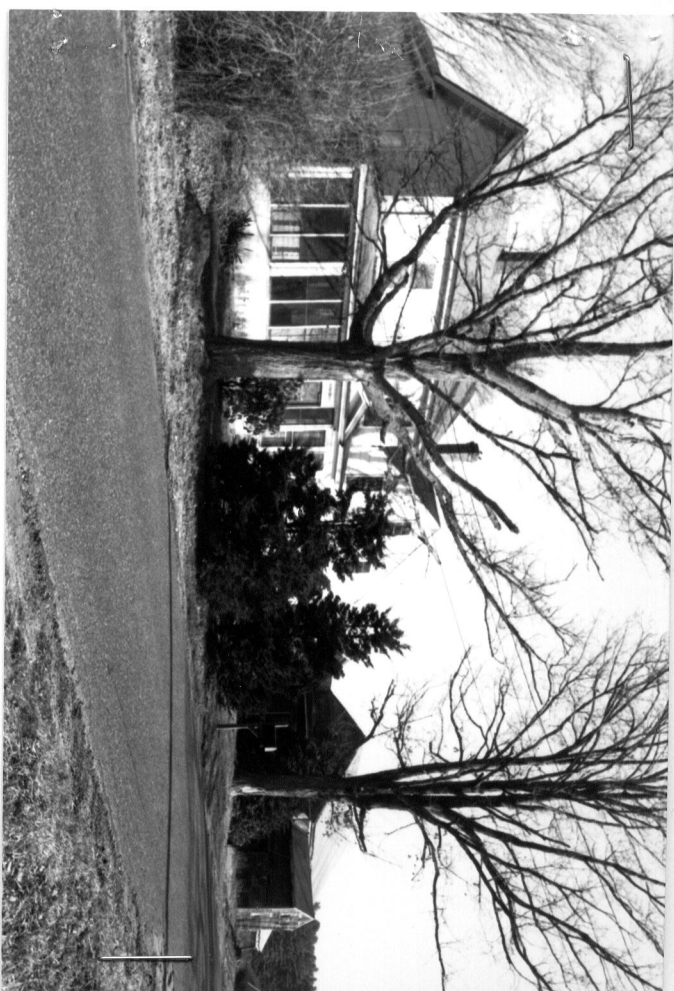
AREA DATA SHEET

MHC#	Parcel #	Street Address	Historic Name	Date	Style/type
370	61-4	67 Northborough Rd.	Williams/Johnson House	early 19th C./ ca. 1866	Cape Cod cottage/ 2-story side-gable
374	" "	" "	cow barn	19th C.	utilitarian
375	" "	" "	milk house	early 20th C.	utilitarian
372	" "	" "	horse barn	19th C.	utilitarian
373	" "	" "	granary	19th C.	utilitarian
371	" "	" "	garage/equipment shed	mid-20th C.	utilitarian
376	" "	" "	granary	late-19th C.	utilitarian
377	" "	" "	tool room	late-19th C.	utilitarian
369	61-4A	75 Northborough Rd. garage	Norman Johnson House	1942	Col. Rev./Craftsman
955	61-4, 4A, 5	farm landscape	Stony Brook Farm	N/A	rural landscape

DEMOLISHED



67 Northboro Rd, looking SE.



67 Northboro Rd.



67 Northboro Rd, looking west to barn.



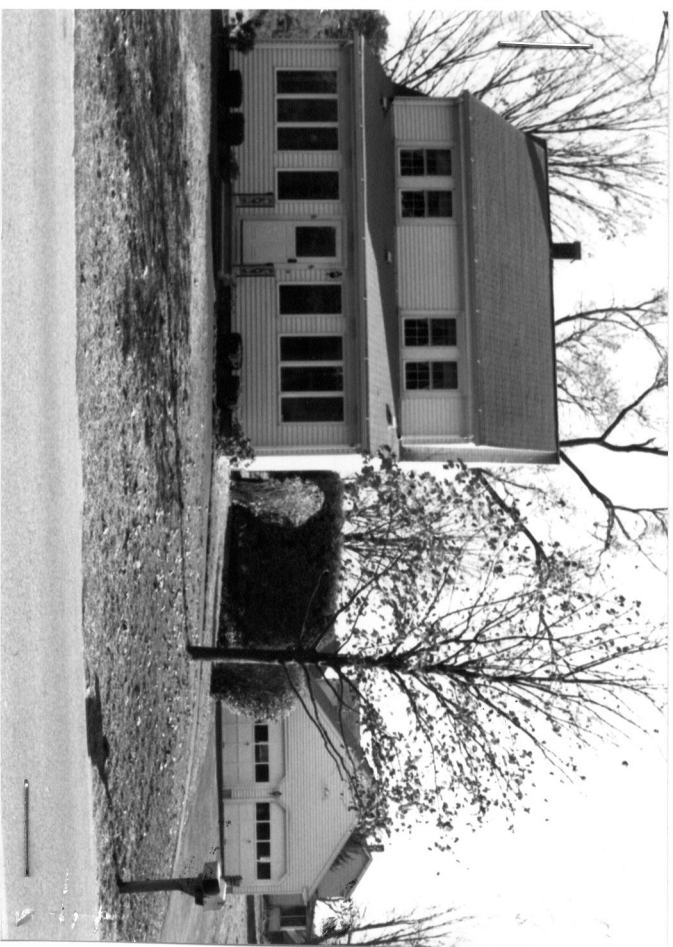
67 Northboro Rd - outbuildings



Barn-67 Northboro Rd.



Barns-67 Northboro Rd.



75 Northboro Rd.