

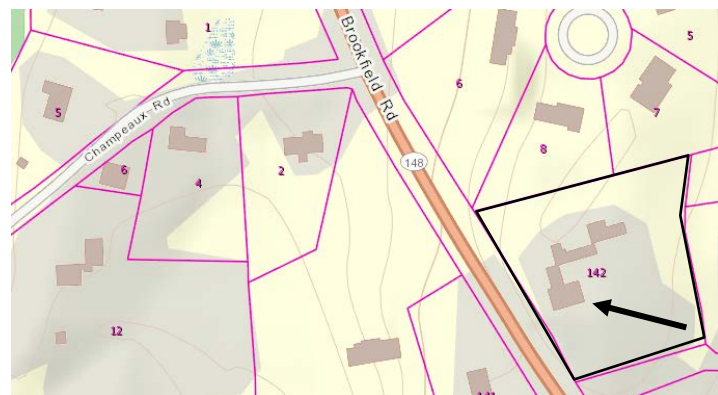
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

173-01916-142

East
Brookfield

STU.229-
STU.231

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Address: 142 Brookfield Road

Historic Name: Joseph Marsh House

Uses: Present: single-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1760

Source: Registry of Deeds

Style/Form: Georgian

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: parged fieldstone

Wall/Trim: clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Two attached barns and equipment shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: house: good; barns: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.54 acres

Setting: Irregularly shaped large parcel with residential building set back and facing south on Brookfield Road, behind a high embankment at roadside

Recorded by: Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): October/2017

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

142 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

STU.229-
STU.231

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The Joseph and Sarah Marsh House at 142 Brookfield Road is a two-and-a-half story, center-chimney, Georgian style house. It is among the best-preserved houses of its period in Sturbridge and shares decorative features and scale with **the Erasmus Babbit Inn, 1772, (STU.36), the Oliver Wight House, ca. 1789, (STU.74) and the Alpheus Wight House, 1787, (STU.89)** on Main Street. The dates of these houses, post-Revolution, indicate the length of time the Georgian style persisted in Sturbridge. The house is five bays wide and two bays deep under a side-gable roof. The clapboard-sided house has a wide skirt board above low, stone foundations. Architectural features of the Georgian period are generally robust and stand out from the plane of the façade as would their Baroque stone antecedents to which they refer. This stylistic character is in place at the Marsh House. The center entry has a classical, pedimented surround supported by wide, fluted pilasters enclosing, wide, full-length sidelights and a four-light transom. The pilasters support a full entablature with architrave, pulvinated frieze and pedimented cornice. There is a row of fine dentils between frieze and cornice, and metopes ornament the cornice. While the pedimented surround over a transom is consistent with the Georgian period, (see the Oliver Wight House and Erasmus Babbit Inn) the full-length sidelights are not, as they are generally over-scaled for the period. It is possible that double leaf doors were at one time replaced with a single door, and the sidelights took up the additional space. Windows on the first story of the south façade and both stories on the east and west elevations have crown-molded lintels that stand away from the plane of their surface. Second story windows on the façade are placed tight to the eaves in Georgian fashion. Window sash is 12/12.

Extending north of the house is a pair of barns. First is an eaves-front barn with two panelled doors on an exterior track. The vertically sided barn has an asphalt shingle roof. Adjacent to the eaves-front barn is a New England barn with a large vehicle opening closed by a panelled door. The New England barn is vertically sided. Extending from its east elevation as an attached equipment shed two bays wide under a side-gable roof.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the 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.

Marsh family genealogical records vary considerably in their dating but according to Hurd's *History of Sturbridge* Joseph (1694-1761) and Sarah Partridge Marsh (married 1718) were among the men and women from Medfield to settle in Sturbridge in the late 1730s. The settlers, in fact, initially named the new Plantation, New Medfield. Joseph and Sarah's first child was Joseph II (1718-1800) and it is likely Joseph II who built this house, ca. 1760. He died in Sturbridge in 1800 and the house appears to have then gone out of the family.

In 1857 John W. Draper was shown on the map of that year to be the owner of the house. John and Lucy Ann Draper began at this house as farmers according to the state and federal censuses of 1855 and 1860, and then 1865 and 1870 John shifted his work to become a lumber dealer. Lumbering became an important factor in Sturbridge's economy as to much of the town had remained woodland in the farming areas that surrounded Fiskdale and the Center. From dealing in lumber, its acquisition and sale, Draper became very active in Fiskdale real estate buying and selling land. Fiskdale's factories were drawing new people to the village, and the Drapers responded by mortgaging purchases for many buyers. They had two sons John, Jr. and Willie. John, Sr.'s mother Meriam, who was 80, and a native American woman, Diana Scott, were living with them in 1850.

By 1870 the house had passed to Samuel F. and Hannah Bemis who were listed as farmers in the censuses from 1870-1900. The Bemises had 140 acres in cultivation and ran a dairy farm with 22 cows and one horse. They raised wheat, corn, oats, barley and hay, and sold surplus from their garden worth \$40. With their dairy herd they produced 700 pounds of butter, a high production figure. It would have been during the Bemis ownership that the carriage and New England barns on the property were added. The equipment shed was likely added once mechanization of farming equipment was fully in place and that would

Continuation sheet 1

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

142 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.229- STU.231
--	---------------------

be after 1900 when the farm had passed to Sturbridge farmers J. Dwight and Mary Underwood. The acreage was extensive, for the farm extended across both sides of Brookfield Road and east to Alum Pond. The Underwoods divided the farm into three tracts which they then sold prior around 1910. The new owners of the Marsh House were Eugene and Abbie Rudiger from Cortland, Westchester County, New York.

Despite coming from a relatively urban area, the Rudigers were also farmers. They were only able to farm for a few years before Abbie died. Eugene then sold the farm in 1925 and moved to Main Street in Sturbridge with his step-daughter Leona Greene. After approximately 165 years, farming at the Marsh House had ended with Eugene and Abbie Rudiger. The new owner was Clara Mercedes Keogh who also came from New York, but in this case from Brooklyn. She, however, had lived in Cortland, Westchester County, New York previously working as a school teacher, but the connection, if any, is not known between the Rudigers and the Keoghs. Clara Mercedes Keogh came to Sturbridge with her mother, also Clara. The younger Clara was a music teacher and the two women lived in Sturbridge full time, not as summer residents. In fact, Clara lived here until her death in 1963. During the 1940s she was joined by Paul Keogh and Paul Keogh, Jr. who worked in Worcester. Raymond and Patrician Stevens were the new owners in 1963 and represented the 20th c. suburban character of Sturbridge, as Raymond worked as an engineer at American Optical in nearby Southbridge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps

Bailey, O. H. & Co. Bird's eye view *Sturbridge and Fiskdale*, Massachusetts, 1892.

Beers, F. W. *Plan of Towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, 1870.

Walling, H. F. *Map of Worcester County*, Wm. E. Baker, Boston, 1857.

Primary Sources

Chase, Nelly M. *Photograph Album*, Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

Secondary Sources

Burns, Brian. *Sturbridge: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk, 1988.

Clark, Joseph. *Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Massachusetts*, Brookfield, Massachusetts, 1838.

Corey, Charles F. "Old Houses in Sturbridge" Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, vol.1, no. 5, 1900.

Davis, George. *A Historical Sketch of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, West Brookfield, 1856.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts*, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1889.

Izard, Holly. *Old Houses of Sturbridge*, scrapbook, n.d., Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

Kelly, J. Frederick. *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut*, New York, 1963.

Digital Resources

www.Ancestry.com for federal censuses 1790-1940 and Massachusetts State Censuses 1855, 1865.

<https://dp.la/> Digital Public Library of America

www.masslandrecords.com for deeds

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

142 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.229- STU.231
--	---------------------



South façade with attached barns

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

142 BROOKFIELD ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	STU.229- STU.231
--	---------------------

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 Bonnie Parsons

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Joseph Marsh House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places meeting criteria A and C.

The history of the Marsh House, its uses and owners, follows the pattern of Sturbridge's larger history. As home to the second generation of Sturbridge settlers, the house is among the oldest remaining in the town. As a farmstead with extensive acreage it represents the agricultural history of the town whose farms were laid out at 100 acres and many of which were subsequently added to for cultivation and investment purposes. From general farms whose production maintained a family with small amounts left for cash sale, farms shifted to dairy that focused on the production of milk and cheese, as was the case with the owners of the Marsh House from about 1900 to 1925.

The Marsh House is significant under criterion C as one of the best-preserved Georgian style houses in Sturbridge that retains its farmland setting. The center chimney house with its elaborate entry surround represents the architecture of prosperous Sturbridge at mid-18th century and together with its later barns and surrounding fields, retain its 19th c. agricultural appearance.

The Marsh House has local significance. It has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.