

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

280-03553-012

Southbridge

STU.F

STU.253

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiske Hill

Address: 12 Fiske Hill Road

Historic Name: Harry H. Pickles House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling
Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: Pre-1931

Source: 1931 Land Plan

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Shingle/Wood

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Possibly a rear addition, date unknown

Condition: Appears Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.5 acres

Setting: Large parcel with buildings set facing towards the west along Fiske Hill Road, near the intersection with Pinehaven Road.

Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2017

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

12 FISKE HILL ROAD

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☐ 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 Harry H. Pickles House, at 12 Fiske Hill Road, is an example of the early twentieth century upscale residential growth and development in Fiske Hill, as the area shifted from agricultural to residential use. This two and a half story, Classical Revival style single family dwelling is three bays wide by four or more bays deep. It has a fieldstone foundation, a wood shingle exterior, with wood trim, and a steeply pitched, asphalt shingle cross gable roof with overhanging eaves. There is a one story, hipped roof colonnaded porch, with elaborate fluted columns, which extends the length of the western facing facade and wraps around the southern and northern side elevations.

The western facing front gabled section of the main façade has a single, large first story window with ten upper divided lights and paired 9/1 second story windows. The porch flooring appears to be cast stone and there are two horizontal metal pipe rails stretching between the lowest sections of the support columns.

The southern side elevation has a portion of the wrap-around colonnaded porch as well as a two and a half story section of the cross-gabled ell with paired first story and second story windows. A two-story wing with a less severely pitched roof is visible off of the rear, eastern side of the building, as well two additional fluted columns incorporated into the existing design (and possibly a clue of a previous configuration). The first and second stories of the northern side elevation appear to have windows which are 9/1. Ground level windows, set in the northern side elevation stone foundation are divided vertically into three lights.

A one-story garage outbuilding is to the northwest of the residence, positioned closer to Fiske Hill Road. There is a single, paneled garage door with four divided lights on the main, southern facing façade, and the foundation is field stone, similar to the foundation of the residence. The exterior walls appear to be clad in vinyl and there is a front gabled, asphalt shingle roof with overhanging eaves. A window with six divided lights is set towards the building's northwestern corner.

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.

Fiske Hill refers to the "first permanent European agricultural settlement after circa 1725" which was established in the Eastern Upland area of Sturbridge.¹ In 1731, brothers Henry and Daniel Fiske settled on the hill, prior to the 1738 incorporation of the town of Sturbridge. These men and their descendants "were important not only on the hill as farmers and founders of the Baptist church there, but also in town government and, by the 1800s, in industrial enterprises in Globe Village, Westville, and Fiskdale."² Fertile soil made this area ideal for agriculture and by the late eighteenth century, Fiske Hill had also developed as a stagecoach road with a Baptist Meeting House, School, and Inn. By the early to mid-twentieth century, development shifted from agricultural towards higher-end residential growth.

While research to date has connected this building to Harry H. Pickles (1889-1973), an early land owner who appears to have been related to the building's construction was Otis E. Leach (1865-1940). It is unknown within the scope of this research if Otis or his family ever lived in this house.

In the 1870 census, Otis was living with his parents, Civil War veteran Ebenezer Leach (born ca. 1837, died prior to 1890), who was listed as working in a Cotton Mill and Lucretia P. Leach (born 1835), and the deeds connected to this property are described

¹ Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984.

² Wilkin, Agnes S. "Fiske Hill, STU.F." Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1973. MACRIS (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclD=STU.F>

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as a portion of the premises (presumably family land) conveyed in 1897 to Otis by Lucretia, and also from his brother, Thomas L. Leach (born 1869) in 1907.³ (Figures 1 and 2)

In the 1900 census, Otis was listed as a Boss Carder at a Wool Mill.⁴ Otis and Margaret (Maggie) Justice Leach (1888-1973) were married in Sturbridge in 1924 and remained residents.⁵ By 1936, Otis is listed as a carpenter who resided at Fiske Hill.⁶ In the 1940 census, he is noted to be employed as a painter.⁷ Otis was also a landowner of several other parcels along Fiske Hill Road. (Figure 3)

A 1930 census notes that Harry H. Pickles (1889-1973), his wife, Sarah E. Pickles (1893-1973), and her son, rented a property on Fiske Hill Road.⁸ In 1943, after Otis' death, the property at 12 Fiske Hill Road was granted to the Pickles family by Maggie, as part of two deeds.⁹

In the early 1920s through the 1950s, Harry is listed as working as a foreman at the American Optical Company.¹⁰ By 1949, Sarah was employed at Ames Worsted Co.¹¹ A few years prior to his death, Harry was employed with Sturbridge Village.¹²

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com (see footnotes)

Genealogybank.com (see footnotes)

Mass Land Records.Com (See footnotes)

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge." 1984. *Secretary of the Commonwealth* (site). Accessed July 2017, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/stu.pdf>

Wilkins, Agnes S. "Fiske Hill, STU.F." Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1973. *MACRIS* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?Mhcid=STU.F>

Worcester District Registry of Deeds (see footnotes)

Figure 1: Atlas of Worcester County, F. W. Beers & Co. 1870
<https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:x059cb92c>

Figure 2: Richards, L.J. "Charlton-Sturbridge-Southbridge-Dudley Towns." *Topographical Atlas of the County of Worcester*, 1898. *HistoricMapWorks.com* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017.
<http://www.historicmapworks.com/Atlas.php?cat=Maps&c=US&a=6717>

Figure 3: "Fiske Hill, Book 68, Page 31, 1931" *MassLandRecords.com*, (site). Accessed October, 2017,
<http://www.masslandrecords.com/worcester/>

³ *Worcester County Registry of Deeds*, Book 2967, Page 185 (1945), Book 1815, Page 202 (1897) and Book 1863, Page 394 (1907) *Masslandrecords.com*

⁴ "Leach, Otis E." *United States Federal Census*. 1900. *Ancestry.com*

⁵ "Otis E. Leach." *Massachusetts Marriage Index*, 1924 and *Southbridge, Massachusetts Directory*, 1928. *Ancestry.com*

⁶ *Ibid*, 1936, *Ancestry.com*

⁷ *Worcester County Registry of Deeds*, Book 2953, Page 88 and Book 2967, Page 185. *Masslandrecords.com*

⁸ "Harry H. Pickles." *1930 United States Federal Census*. *Ancestry.com*

⁹ *Worcester County Registry of Deeds*, Book 2887, Page 152, 1943 and Book 2901, Page 466, 1943. *MassLandRecords.com*

¹⁰ "Pickles, Harry (Sarah)." *Sturbridge Town Directory*, 1922, 1949. *Ancestry.com*

¹¹ "Pickles, Harry H." 1952 Manning's *Sturbridge Directory*, *Ancestry.com*

¹² "Pickles, Harry H." 1965 *Southbridge City Directory*, *Ancestry.com*

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Photo 1: Western facing main façade and southern side elevation



Photo 2: Western facing main façade and northern side elevation

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Photo 3: Southern facing outbuilding, to the northwest of the residence

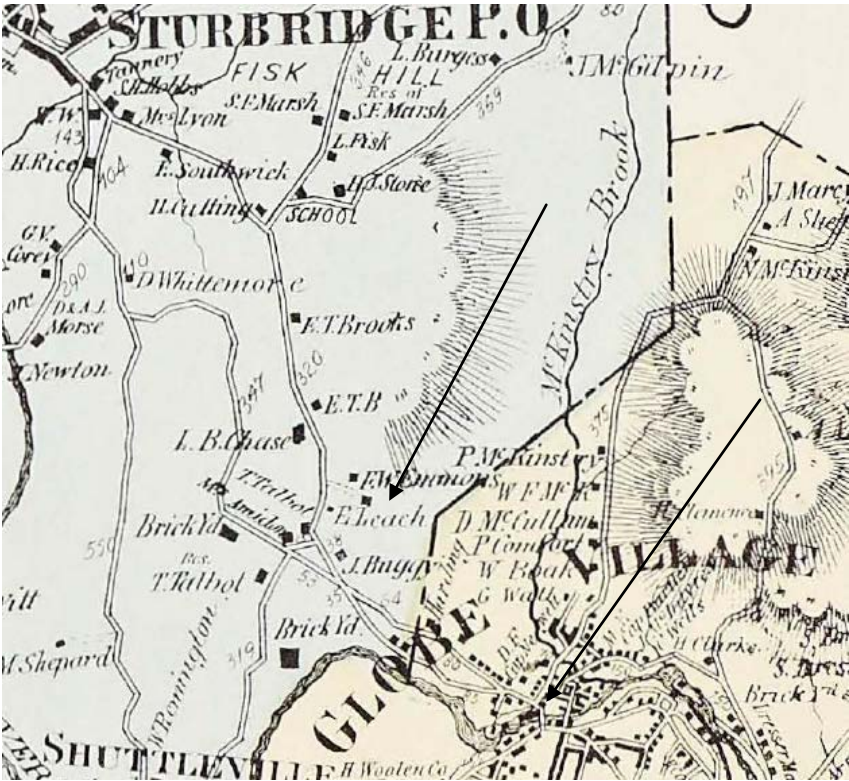


Figure 1: 1870 Map showing Ebenezer Leach property

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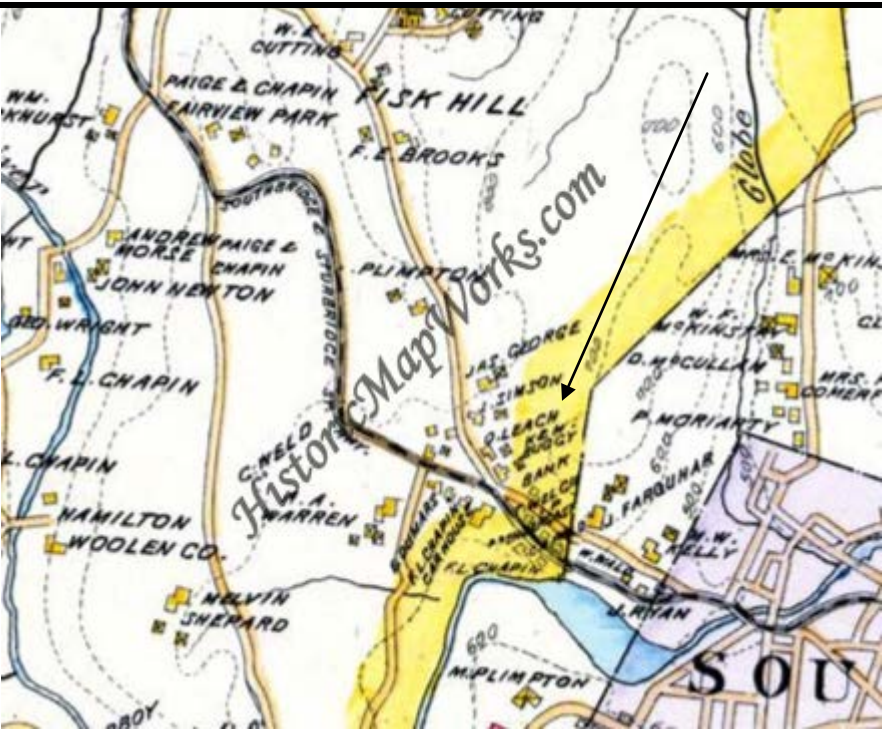


Figure 2: 1898 Map showing Otis Leach property and buildings

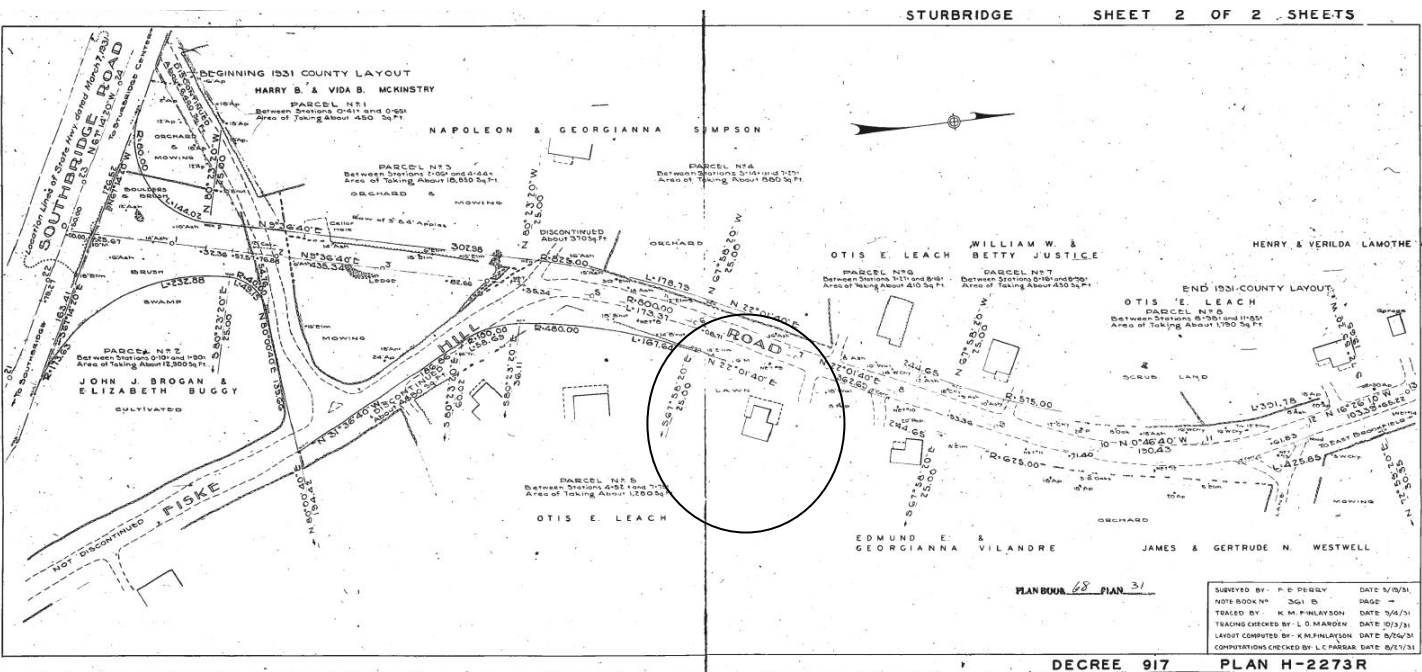


Figure 3: 1931 Land Map showing Otis E. Leach property and current building (circled)