

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

280-03553-008

Southbridge

STU.F

STU.252

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 8 Fiske Hill Road

Historic Name: Otis E. Leach House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: Early twentieth century, by 1931

Source: 1931 Land Plan

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Not visible from street

Wall/Trim: Clapboard/Wood

Roof: Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Windows (date unknown)

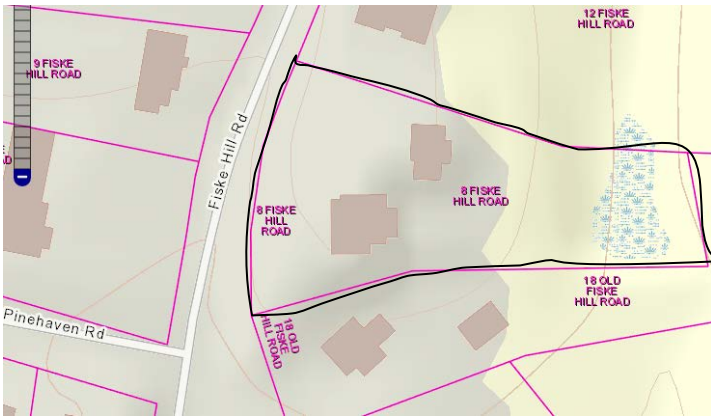
Condition: Appears Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .81 acres

Setting: Set on an irregularly shaped, partially wooded lot with the buildings facing west along Fiske Hill Road. Near the intersection of Fiske Hill and Pinehaven Roads and close to Main Street.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Shannon Walsh, PVPC

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2017

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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 Otis E. Leach house at 8 Fiske Hill Road is an example of the early twentieth century upscale residential growth and development along Fiske Hill Road, as the area shifted from agricultural to residential use. This one and a half story Classical Revival style single family dwelling is set up on a hill, with a parcel that contains a perimeter stone retaining wall and is partially obscured by trees. The residence appears to be two or more bays wide by four bays deep, with a clapboard exterior. It has a moderately pitched, side gable slate roof with a cross gable dormer, overhanging eaves and a bracketed cornice. A one story colonnaded porch with elaborate porch support columns and a masonry porch skirt extends along the main, western facing façade and wraps around the southern elevation. There is an exterior brick chimney on the southern elevation.

The main, western facing facade has a pair of first story tripled windows (currently 1/1) and a grouping of three 1/1 windows in the upper half story cross gabled dormer. Five, elaborate, fluted wood porch columns extend along the western edge of the porch and there are additional columns around the southern side. There is an entry and additional fenestrations on the southern, first story elevation and upper half story tripled 1/1 windows are set within the gable. The northern elevation has first story windows, obscured by shrubbery, and a trio of upper half story 1/1 windows set in the gable, matching the main façade upper story windows. Overhanging eaves and a bracketed cornice are visible from this perspective as well. The northeastern corner of this elevation contains a one story shed roof ell with a secondary entrance and a 1/1 window on the ell's western elevation.

A one story, two bay wide garage outbuilding is to the northeast of the residence, accessed by a paved driveway. It has a side gabled roof and a one-story carport off of the southern elevation.

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.

In the 1870 census, Otis E. Leach (1865-1940) 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 as a portion of the premises conveyed in 1897 to Otis by Lucretia, and also from his brother, Thomas L. Leach (born 1869) in 1907, which was presumably family land.³ (Figure 1) 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

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

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

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

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

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remained residents.⁵ By 1936, Oits 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 Oits was also a landowner of several other parcels along Fiske Hill Road. (Figure 3)

Archie J Gagnon (1913-1980) and his wife, Antoinette S. Gagnon (1913-1999) were residents of 8 Fiske Hill Road as early as 1949, according to the local Southbridge directory.⁸ In the early 1950s, Archie was employed as the treasurer and sales manager at Arland Tool Manufacturing and was also formerly the treasurer at Cedar Lake Enterprises, Inc.⁹

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com (see footnotes)

Clark, Reverend Joseph S. , *An Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Mass. From its Settlement to the Present Time*. Brookfield: E. and L. Merriam, Printers, 1838. *Archive.org* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <https://archive.org/details/historicalskech00clar>

Genealogybank.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>

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

Wilkins, Agnes S. "Fiske Hill, STU.F." Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1973. *MACRIS* (site). Accessed on-line October 2017, <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhclId=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." *Worcester County, 1898*. *HistoricMapWorks.Com*
<http://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/6730/Charlton+++Sturbridge+++Southbridge+++Dudley+Towns/Worcester+County+1898/Massachusetts/>

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

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.

⁸ Archie J. Gagnon 1969 Book 4940 Page 85 *Worcester District Registry of Deeds*

⁹ "Archie J (Antoinette S)." *Southbridge City Directory*, 1952. *Ancestry.com*

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Photo 1: Main, western facing façade



Photo 2: Western façade and partial view of southern side elevation

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Photo 3: Northern side elevation, western main façade and wider view of parcel and outbuilding



Photo 4: Western facing main façade of garage outbuilding

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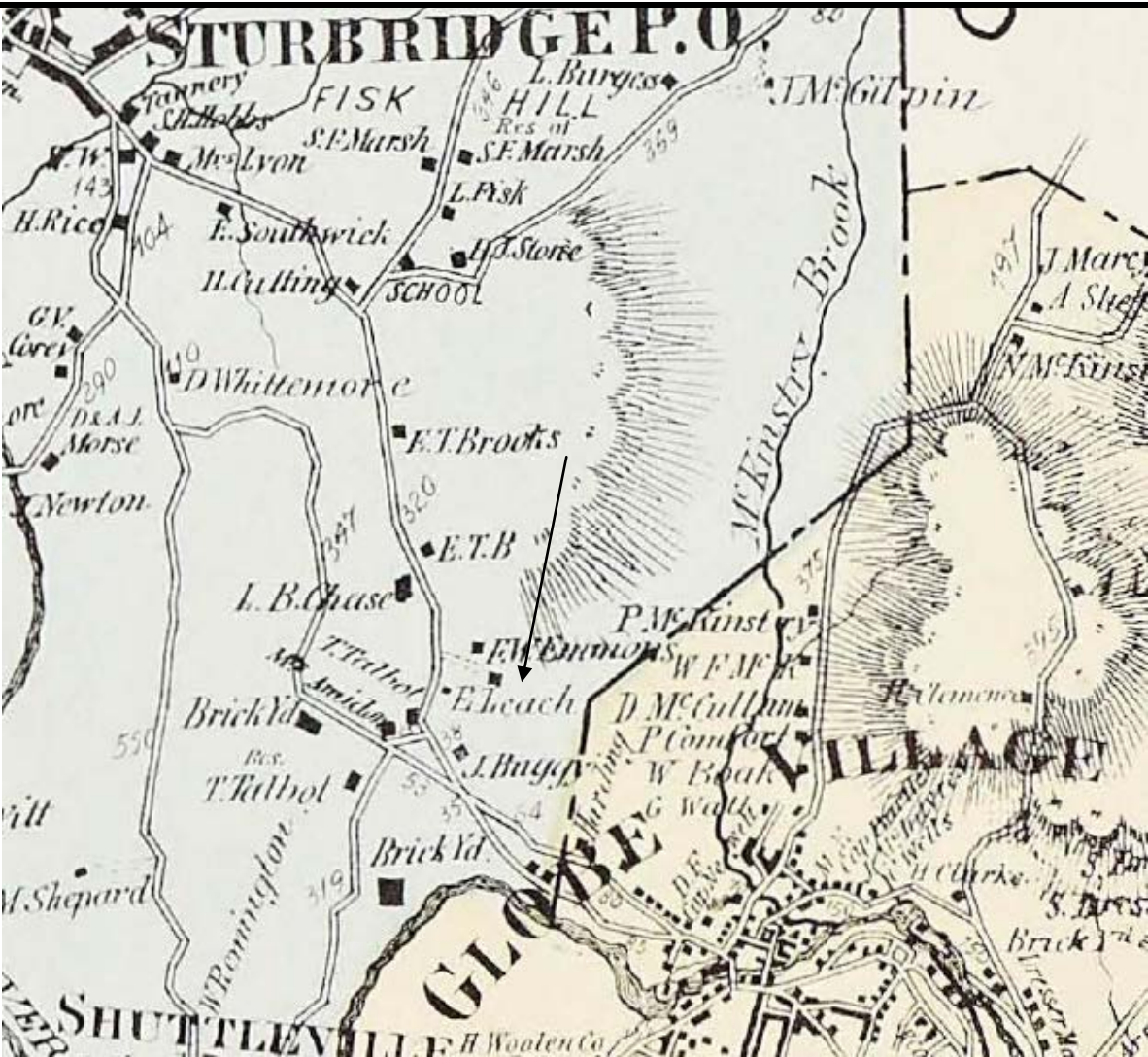


Figure 1: Ebenezer Leach property on eastern side of Fiske Hill Road, 1870 Worcester County Map

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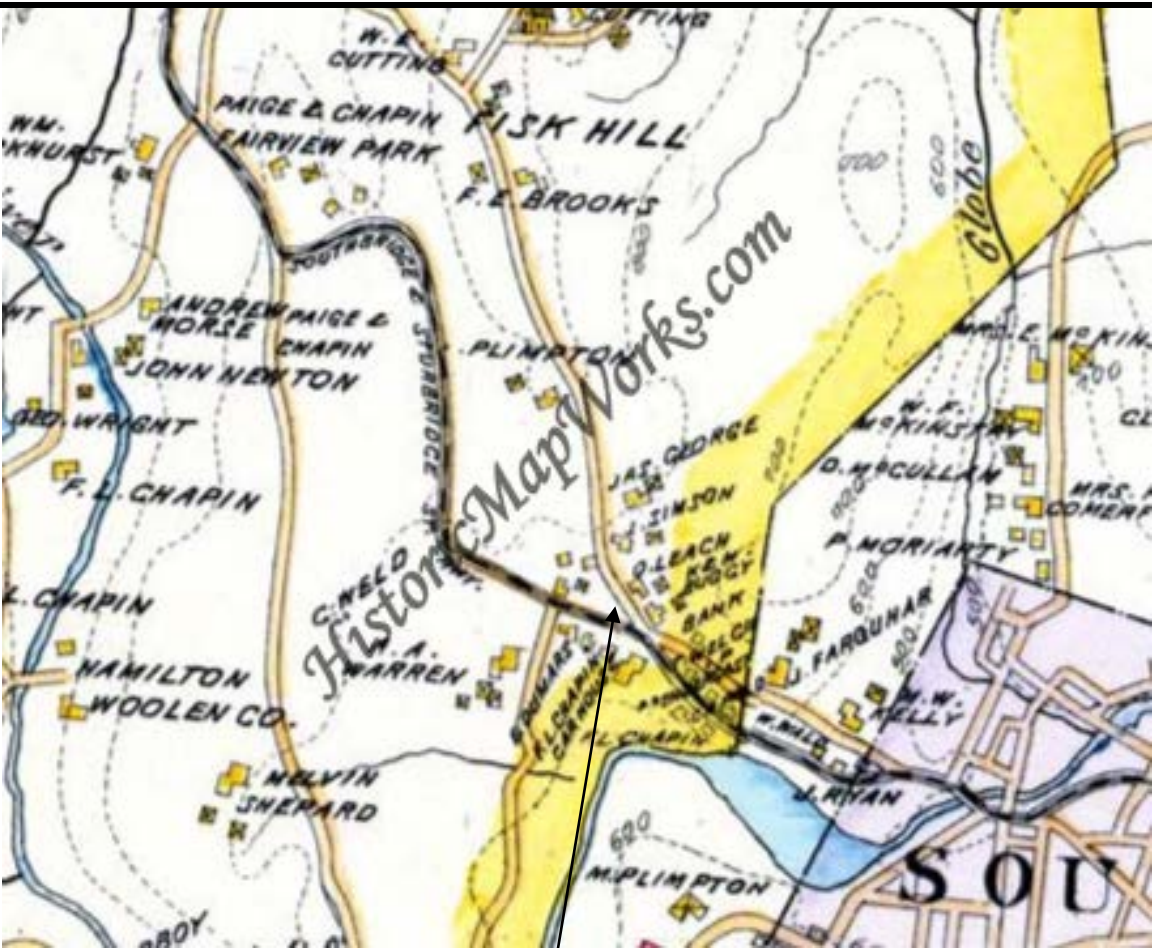


Figure 2: 1898 showing Otis Leach Property

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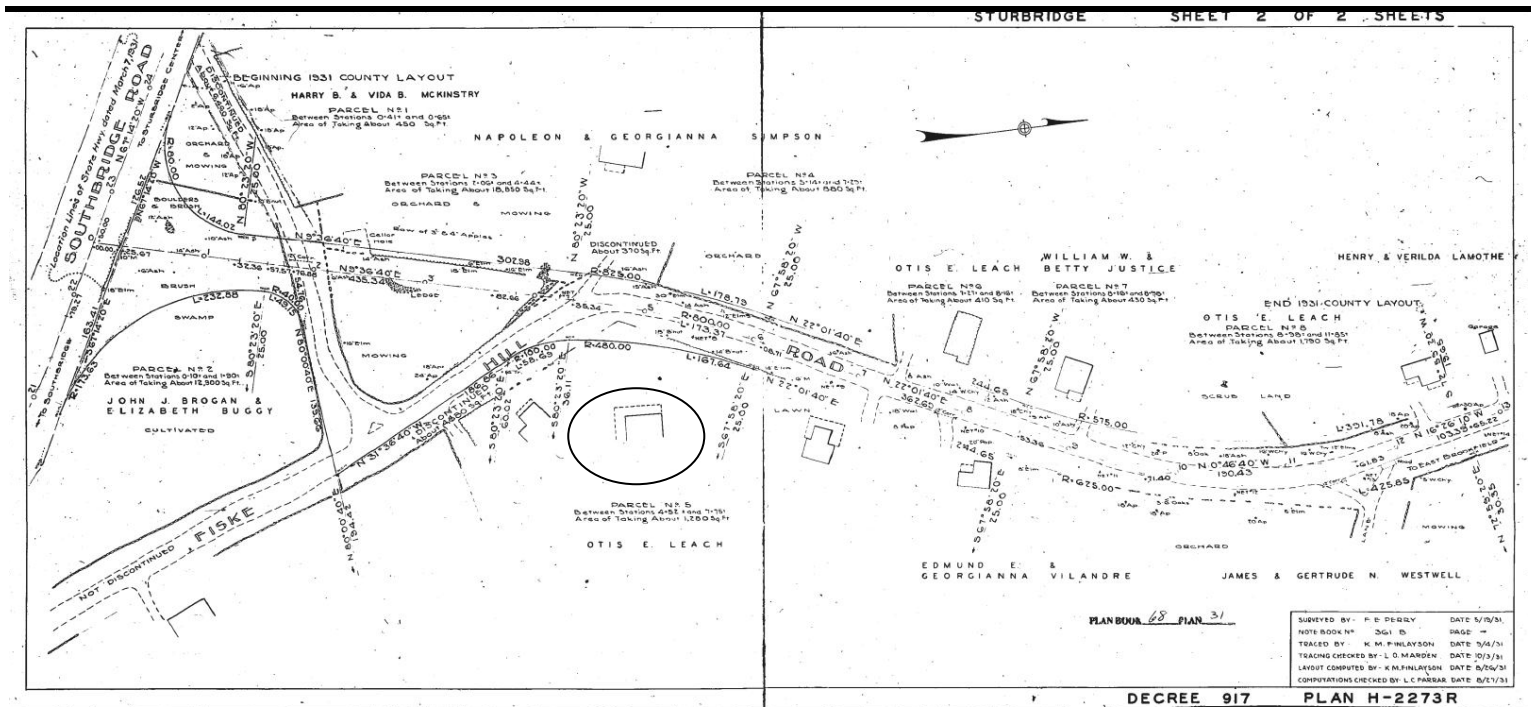


Figure 3: Otis E. Leach residence is circled, 1931 Land Plan, note additional properties owned by Leach