

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02925-266

Southbridge

STU.A

STU.28
STU.333

NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Sturbridge Center

Photograph



Address: 266 Main Street

Historic Name: Roswell Warner House and Barn

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1800

Source: Levine 1971

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard/Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*): east wing, second-story porch, 1970s; vinyl windows, early 21st c.

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.2 acres

Setting: The building occupies a long rectangular lot on the north side of Main Street in a mostly residential neighborhood surrounding the Sturbridge Town Common. It sits atop a sandy bluff overlooking Main Street.

Locus Map



Recorded by: L. Kline, G. Pineo, E. Giacomarra; PAL

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): May 2018

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

266 MAIN STREET

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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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Roswell Warner House (ca. 1800, STU.28) is a south-facing, Federal-style, three-bay-by-two-bay, two-story, wood-frame building with a stone foundation and a two-story, four-bay long rear ell extending from the north elevation. A one-story ell extends from the east elevation of the rear ell. The house has a hip roof over the main section and an end-gable roof over the rear ell. The walls are clad with wood clapboard and corner boards, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The off-center, main entrance is flanked by fluted pilasters and has a dentilled lintel. It contains a four-panel wood door with a fanlight beneath a transom. Fenestration consists of replacement six-over-six, double-hung vinyl sash.

The Roswell Warner Barn (ca. 1850, STU.333) is located to the west of the house. The astylistic, one-and-one-half-story building is clad with vertical boards and has an end-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. An off-center, double-leaf wood door is in the south elevation, and a six-over-six, double-hung vinyl replacement window is in the gable peak.

The Roswell Warner House is an unusual example of an asymmetric Federal-style house in Sturbridge.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Roswell Warner House and Barn (ca. 1800 and 1850, STU.28 and STU.333) are in the center of Sturbridge, east of the Sturbridge Town Common, facing onto Main Street.¹ The area was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield, and Sturbridge was incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3–4).

The Warner House was constructed about 1800 for blacksmith Roswell Warner (1775–1863), whose blacksmith shop east of the house was extant by 1795 (Levine 1971). Warner married Mary Scott Gibson (1777–1858) in 1799 and occupied the property through 1815, but by 1825, it was owned by Levi Barnes (1775–1863) (Find a Grave 2014; Levine 1971). Barnes was also a blacksmith and a stagecoach operator (Izard 1994). By 1835, the blacksmith shop was no longer extant, and the property was owned by wheelwright Jonathan Tiffany (1782–1865) (Levine 1971). Tiffany, his wife Experience Chamberlain, and their son Edwin Tiffany (1810–1890), moved from Sturbridge to Southbridge by 1830 and to Hartford, Connecticut, by 1850.

By 1845, the physician Dr. William S. Sanders (1815–1862) resided at the property with his wife, Mary B. Sanders (1813–1880). To the west of the house, on the same lot, was a law office occupied by a Mr. Davis (Levine 1971). After his death, Mary Sanders sold the property to Elbridge Cass of Sturbridge in 1865 (Find a Grave 2014; US Census 1850; WCRD 708/200).

Elbridge Cass (1794–1879) was a farmer in Sturbridge, and he married Rhoda Pratt Jaynes (1811–1883) in 1860. It was a second marriage for both, and Rhoda's two children from her previous marriage, George A. Jaynes (1840–1902) and Mary M. Jaynes (1844–1929), resided with the Casses in 1860. By 1870, Mary Jaynes had married shoemaker Frank Gerould (1840–1908), and the Geroulds lived with the Casses (Find a Grave 2014; US Census 1860, 1870, 1880). After the Casses died, the property was left to both of Rhoda's children. Mary Gerould bought out her brother's share in 1887 and became sole owner (WCRD 1232/514). She and her husband continued to reside at the property through their deaths.

In 1937, George Jaynes' daughter, Flora (1870–1964), purchased the house from her aunt Mary Gerould's estate (WCRD 2697/287). Flora, a teacher, married motorman Franklin F. Plimpton (1867–1951) of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1892. In 1900, Franklin and Flora Plimpton and her parents, George and Eliza Jaynes, all lived at 47 Burnside Avenue in Somerville, Massachusetts (US Census 1900). The Plimptons still lived in Somerville in 1930, renting part of a duplex at 163 Elene Street

¹ In previous documentation, the house was referred to as the Gerould (also Gerold) House or the Plimpton-Miller House, after subsequent owners, but it is more accurately called the Roswell Warner House, after the first documented occupant.

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(US Census 1930). Following their purchase of 266 Main Street, the Plimptons moved to Sturbridge and owned the property until 1949, when they sold it to William and Blanche Hampshire (WCRD 3172/519).

Ownership of the property changed frequently through the second half of the twentieth century, until 1978, when the Christian Science Society of Sturbridge purchased the house for use as a Christian Science library. In 2002, the Christian Science Society sold the property to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, who sold it to the present owners, Arthur Bailan and Olga Restepro, the same year (WCRD 6497/69, 27822/330, 27822/332; Sturbridge Assessor 2018).

The Roswell Warner House and Barn were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 1977, as part of the Sturbridge Common Historic District.

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PHOTOGRAPH



Photo 2. Barn, 266 Main Street, looking northeast.