

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02924-271 Southbridge STU.A STU.38
NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 283 Main Street

Historic Name: Wheelock-Champion-Bachelor House

Uses: Present: Commercial Block, Multiple Family Dwelling
Original: Single Family Dwelling, Post Office, Carriage Factory

Date of Construction: ca. 1820–1857

Source: Levine 1971, Beers 1870

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard, Brick/Wood Trim

Roof: Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): three buildings connected, ca. 1910; windows replaced, late 20th/early 21st century; former Chamberlain Barn (STU.37) moved to 277 Main Street, 2017

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 7.59 acres

Setting: The building occupies a roughly rectangular lot on the south side of Main Street in a mostly residential neighborhood east of the Sturbridge Town Common. It is set slightly back from the road and is immediately west of the Publick House inn complex.

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

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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 Wheelock-Champion-Bachellor House (ca. 1820–1857, STU.38) comprises three nineteenth-century buildings constructed by three different individuals that were connected in the early twentieth century by Alvin B. Chamberlain. The east building, the Bachellor House, is a north-facing, Greek Revival-style, two-story, three-bay-wide, wood-frame building with a stone foundation and an end-gable roof. The center building, the Champion House, is a north-facing, Greek Revival-style, two-story, two-bay-wide, wood-frame building with a stone foundation and an end-gable roof. The west building, the Wheelock House, is a north-facing, Greek Revival-style, two-story, three-bay-wide, brick building with a stone foundation and an end-gable roof. The Bachellor and Champion houses are connected by a narrow, one-story hyphen with a shed roof. The Champion and Wheelock houses are connected by a two-story, two-bay hyphen with a side-gable roof. The two wood-frame buildings are clad with wood clapboards, and all three building roofs are covered with slate shingles. Entrances are irregularly spaced across all three buildings and filled with nine- and two-light wood doors. Fenestration consists primarily of six-over-six, double-hung vinyl replacement sash and wide storefront windows.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Wheelock-Champion-Bachellor House (ca. 1820–1857, STU.38) is in the center of Sturbridge, south of the Sturbridge Town Common. The area was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield, and Sturbridge was incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3–4).

The group of three interconnected buildings at 283 Main Street, the Wheelock-Champion-Bachellor House (ca. 1820–1857, STU.38), began with the construction of the westernmost building, the Wheelock House, between 1815 and 1825 for Francis Wheelock, about whom little is known (Levine 1971). The Wheelock House was built near, and likely replaced, a hat shop owned by David Pike in 1795 and used next as a store by Timothy Newell.

By 1835, the Wheelock House was occupied by Otis Blood, a painter, and the easternmost building of the three (with an attached outbuilding) was constructed for James Bachellor, a chaisemaker (Levine 1971). In 1845, Elisha F. Shaw, a tailor, owned the Wheelock House, and Otis Blood had moved to the Bachellor House (Levine 1971). In 1853, Blood sold his property to Jonah B. Griswold, a marble cutter (WCRD 512/440). The center building, the Champion House, first appears on the 1857 Walling map, which shows Elisha F. Shaw in the western building, Salmon Champion in the center building, and Griswold in the eastern building. Griswold also owned a gravestone shop to the southeast. Shaw was a tailor who lived with his wife and their three children, along with his father, Joseph, who was a farmer, and several others who may have been boarders or relatives. Champion was an innkeeper and may have operated the Publick House to the east (see Publick House Area, STU.O) (US Census 1850; Walling 1857). By 1870, the western and center buildings were owned by C. Fay and Griswold still owned the eastern building, along with his gravestone shop and another outbuilding (Beers 1870). The 1870 US Census indicates that Fay did not live in either of the buildings he owned, as Griswold's nearby neighbors were Alvin B. Chamberlain, a grocer; Abner S. Haskins, who worked in a shoe shop; and Joseph LaChapelle, a Canadian immigrant who worked as a blacksmith (US Census 1870).

By 1898, Elizabeth Plimpton, wife of J. H. Plimpton, owned the former Griswold property; the center building was used as a post office; and Alvin B. Chamberlain owned two outbuildings immediately adjacent to the east wall of the cemetery located west of the subject property (Richards 1898; WCRD 1506/501). Chamberlain acquired all three buildings by 1905, when he purchased the Plimpton property and property owned by John S. Hubbard (WCRD 1802/441, 1819/597). The deed between John Hubbard and Alvin Chamberlain refers to "the southeast corner of the cellar hole marking the site of the Griswold shop," indicating that the Griswold gravestone shop had been demolished by that time (WCRD 1818/597).

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Alvin B. Chamberlain (1842–1912) owned the property until his death in 1912 but moved to Sterling, Massachusetts, by 1910 (US Census 1910). He operated a grocery store and a post office on his property and served as the Sturbridge Town Clerk for over 30 years (Burns 1988:108). Chamberlain made several alterations and improvements to the property, including connecting the three originally detached buildings and possibly constructing or altering a barn southeast of the easternmost building. The A. B. Chamberlain Grain and Feed Barn (STU.37) was converted to a garage by 1948 (Holley and Wilkin 1972; Rairigh 2017; Sanborn 1899, 1911, 1948). After Chamberlain's death, his adopted son Clifford owned the property, maintained the store, and took over as Town Clerk, a position that he held for 38 years until his retirement in 1958 (US Census 1900; Burns 1988:108). In 1981, the property passed from the Chamberlain family to The Sandwich Board (later The Tillyer Property, Inc.) via Clifford's daughter Winifred Tillyer, who was the executrix of her father's will (WCRD 7155/201; Secretary of State 2018). In 2003, the property was sold to the current owner, Resurrection Real Estate, which also owns the Chamberlain House (275 Main Street, STU.35) and The Publick House at 277 Main Street (WCRD 31465/63). In 2017, the Chamberlain Barn was moved to the south end of the Publick House property to accommodate a new hotel building that is currently (Spring 2018) under construction.

The Wheelock-Champion-Bachelor House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 1977, as part of the Sturbridge Common Historic District.

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HISTORIC IMAGE



Figure 1. 1892 image of the A.B. Chamberlain Store and Residence, 283 Main Street (Bailey 1892).