

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's Number

USGS Quad

Area(s) Form Number

45-1

Sandwich

MM N-17

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125



Place (neighborhood or village) BARNSTABLE

Newtown (Marstons Mills)

Address: ⁸⁸⁵ 931 River Road

Historic Name: Zenas Crocker House

Uses: Present: Residence

Original: Farmhouse

Date of Construction: 1880

Source: Barn. Deeds 148/100, 165/474

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Stephen Crocker Hamblin

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Cedar shingle

Roof: Composition

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: One story shed to south.

Major Alterations (with dates):

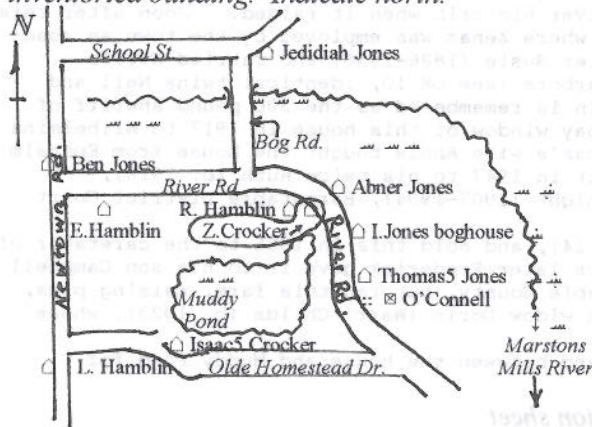
Condition Close to original

Moved no yes Date:

Acreage: 1

Setting: Crest of rural upland north of cranberry bogs of Muddy Pond conservation area.

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by James W. Gould

Organization Marstons Mills
Historical Society

Date (month / year) 30 Sept. 2000

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

The house is a mirror twin of the neighboring Ruhamah Hamblin house (MM N-14) to the west, built about the same time, but has survived with fewer modifications. It is a two story vernacular Greek Revival, front-gabled, with front entry on the right (west) side of three bays. The basic plan is rectangular, on a brick foundation, and a one story bay on a brick foundation added on the east side. There is a one and a half story back ell on the south end, and a farther extension south by a one story gabled back entry porch about 6 x 6. The front facade on the north is enclosed by a screened porch under a shed roof, and supported by concrete block pillars. On the second story east is a shed dormer with a single window. The exterior is clad in cedar shingle with white trim. The roof is composition shingle. There are two thin brick chimney stacks, one at the south side of the two story extension.

The one story shed, situated about 100 feet south, is modern, a simple gabled structure, clad in shingles on vertical boards, with barn doors on the north end, a one story lean-to on the east side.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

see continuation sheet

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.

The house and its twin were built in the fall of 1880 by Stephen⁷ Crocker Hamblin (1851-1881), sixth child of Luther⁶ Hamblin and Caroline Crocker, whose house is on Newtown Rd. to the southwest. Stephen Hamblin bought two pieces of cleared land totalling over six acres from his aunt Cynthia (Jones) Hamblin in 1879 and 1880, but there is no reference to a building on them, nor does the Walker atlas show any in 1880.

Hamblin was the principal cranberry bog builder for the Cranberry King A.D. Makepeace, in 1879 on the Folger/Santuit Bog, then in 1880 on the Wan(kin)co Bog. The main focus of his energy was on the development and management of neighboring bogs like Baker Bog surrounding this house, named for his principal investment partner, George F. Baker. In Aug. 1880, Makepeace was pricing lumber and windows, and bought 1200 bricks, far more than would be needed for the bog houses he was building. In Oct. he paid B.F. Crocker & Co. \$688.57 for lumber, and Hamblin and neighbor Orrin Mecarta for tools, turf & cartage. On Nov. 9 two wells were driven. Total building costs were \$1,524.23.

Makepeace had been living on his farmhouse at the west end of Hyannis until this time, but moved out permanently. In June he paid Hamblin for his own board and for three others. Sometime later he moved to West Barnstable, to the Makepeace Cranberry House at 2454 Meeting House Way (Rt. 149) in West Barnstable was moved from this area, though it cannot have been the Isaac Jones house, which still stands in ruin across River Road (see inventory). It is possible that this house was built at the same time.

Stephen had married in 1878 to Virginia-born Ruhamah (Powers) Makepeace (1835-1925), widow of Alvin, half-brother of Abel Makepeace. Ruhamah was again widowed by Stephen's death in 1881. Without children by Stephen, she sold house, barn and other buildings on 6½ acres on the Newtown Road near the house of the late Isaac Jones for \$1000 to her son by her first husband William T. Makepeace in 1885. In 1887 Ruhamah remarried to the retired whaling master Capt. Seth⁷ Nickerson Jr. (1814-92) of Cotuit until his death five years later. She then married a fourth time to Joseph A. Baker of W. Harwich, with whom she is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery (1925). "E. Jones" is shown as owner in the 1909 Atlas, displaced too far south, like the neighboring misspelled "Marcarta" (Mecarta) house. This is probably Ephraim L. Jones (1861-1930), cranberry farmer who lived at 760 River Rd. (see MM N-13).

Jones evidently rented the house prior to sale in 1912 to Zenas⁸ IV Crocker (1864-1963), who had grown up in Cotuit, but had gone west to run a hardware store in Yorktown ND, marry a Canadian born woman Annie MacLean (1865-1920), return briefly in 1890 to Cotuit to share a home at 10 Putnam Av. (CTB 17) with his sister Ellen Handy. The family returned to ND, where they homesteaded, and Annie gave birth in 1895 to their last child Laughlin in a sod hut, so leaky that she had to hold an umbrella over his crib when it rained. Soon after this the family returned to the Cape, to this house in Marstons Mills, where Zenas was employed by the town as road-grader operator. Here they raised their five children, one daughter Susie (1886-1936) who married Willis Nickerson, stock broker Zenas V (1887-1960) who moved to Oyster Harbors (see OH 10, identical twins Neil and Henry (b. 1889, d. 1969, 1965), and Laughlin (1895-1947). Laughlin is remembered as the 300 pound sheriff of Barnstable County for 14 years (1933-47). He was married in the bay window of this house in 1917 to Wilhelmina Sherman prior to his service as major in World War I. In 1912 Zenas's wife Annie bought the house from Ephraim Jones, and on her death in 1920 it went to her husband, who gave it in 1947 to his niece Ruth (b. 1918), daughter of his brother Neil, and Ruth's husband Hon. Alfred C. Knight (1907-1994), Barnstable District Court and probate judge.

In 1950 the Knights moved to 24 Poponesset Rd., Cotuit (C WF 24), and sold this in 1956 to the caretaker of the Whitcomb Farm, (Frederick) Howard Childs for \$2000. Five years later Frederick gave it to his son Campbell Childs (1922-90). Campbell became correctional officer of Barnstable County, but ran this farm, raising pigs, chickens, cows and vegetables. It continues to be the home of his widow Doris (Warr) Childs (b. 1923), whose daughter Carolyn (Appleby) Magowan lives next door.

In June 2000 the town paid Doris Childs \$325,000 for the upland between the house and Muddy Pond for conservation land in one of the first Land Bank purchases.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

- A.D. Makepeace diaries 1880: 8 July, 4-9 Aug., 9, 14, 24 Nov.; 1881: 27 June.
Barnstable deeds 127/303, 132/514, 148/100, 165/474, 316/77, 675/107-8, 874/220, 1059/188, 13104/283.
Barnstable probate 8005 (S. Crocker).
MHC Form B #WBB 51, 2454 Meetinghouse Way, W. Barnstable by M. Wirtanen.
William Makepeace, *A Genealogy of the Makepeace Family* (Boston: David Clapp, 1858), p. 52; *The Nickerson Family* (Nickerson Family Assn., 1997), IV: 130, 131; III: 276; Hamblin Genealogy by Prof. Stephen Hamblin.
Three Centuries of the Cape Cod County (The County, 1985), pp. 47-9.
Andrea Leonard, *A Crocker Genealogy* (Bowie MD: Heritage Books, 1995), pp. 107B, 125.
Interviews with owner Doris Childs 3 Oct. 2000; Laughlin Crocker Jr. & Zenas VI Crocker 25 July 2000.
Map & Atlases 1857, 1880 (no buildings), 1909 (p. 21a).

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria*

