

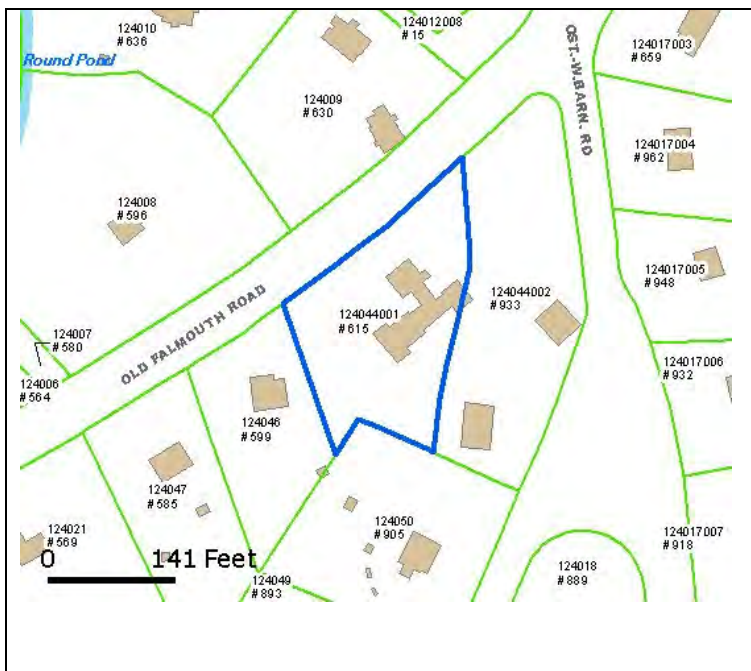
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: J. W. Gould, R. Frazee
Organization: Marstons Mills Historical Society,
Barnstable Historical Commission
Date (month / year): May 2009

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

124044001

Sandwich

E

41

Town: Barnstable

Place: (*neighborhood or village*) Marstons Mills

Address: 615 Old Falmouth Road

Historic Name: John Howland Homestead

Uses: Present: Single family residence

Original: Farmstead

Date of Construction: Early 19th century; reputed 1780.

Source: Architectural details observed; marriage of Nathaniel Howland to Dorinda Fish, 1838.

Style/Form: Three-quarter cape

Architect/Builder: John Howland

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Mortared fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Cedar shingle stained gray

Roof: Composition shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Attached motorhome garage, 16' x 42', built 1997.

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Original half-cape expanded in early 19th century by one bay; center chimney replaced by two brick stacks, 1880s?; kitchen ell expanded 1978 with large chimney.

Condition: Much altered, with remnant early features in attic and cellar.

Moved: no | X | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 1.0 acres.

Setting: Rural, at major crossroads of Old Falmouth Road, Osterville-West Barnstable Road, and Lumberts Mill Road.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

[TOWN]

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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 overall layout of the current house is T shaped, with the original house at the base of the T, on the north end, facing Old Falmouth Road. The oldest part is a three quarter Cape Cod cottage of four bays, 30 feet wide and 28 feet deep. The foundation is mortared fieldstone, accessible from the south side by a mortared stone stairway leading from a trapdoor in the kitchen ell. The exterior is clad in cedar shingle stained gray, with white trim.

The roof is composition shingle, with two small brick chimneys, each corbeled near its uppermost course. A distinct line on the roof marks the addition of another bay to the original half-house. Visible in the attic is vertical wide pine board sheathing at each gable end, and across the entire roof deck. The latter is supported on hewn principal rafters and purlins. Nearby identical construction methods employed in both the original and the the added section suggest that the extra bay was added not long after the house was built.

2 over 2 ground floor windows, and virtually all the interior trim, including doors, staircase newel and balusters, etc., are typical of the late XIXth or early XXth century when a major remodeling took place.

At the rear of the original house is a 20 foot long kitchen with a large brick chimney, built about 1975. South of this is a T wing with extensions east and west, all built in 1997 in the same exterior as the original house, gray stained shingle, with white trim. To the east is a one story bedroom 30 x 20. To the east is a two car garage and a garage for a 40 foot motorhome.

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.

The house lies in the Plains part of Marstons Mills, in the west half of Barnstable, where the Howland family received proprietors' grants of land as early as 1708 (Lot 64, et al). It is in the upper reaches of the Skunknet River, just south of Round Pond. Referred to as "Old Halfway House" (*Patriot* 19 Aug. 1884), the house is situated at the intersections of several important roads. It is midway on the Osterville-West Barnstable Road where the mail road crosses Old Falmouth Road which joined the shire town to Falmouth. The importance of the junction is accentuated by the meeting of the road to Lumbert's grist mill and Centerville.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Barnstable County Registry of Deeds: Deeds 626/231-2, 699/548, 839/92, 1280/284,9, 1327/187, 2032/269, 3467/300, 11110/181;

Probates 2886, 12017, 18696, 20383 (Howland).

Town of Barnstable vital records.

Barnstable Patriot 5 Oct. 1880, 20 Dec. 1881, 7 March 1882, 15 April 1884, 19 Aug. 1884, 1 July 1895, 26 Sept. 1898, 21 March 1904, 17 Aug. 1914, 16 Dec. 1918, 8 Oct., 24 Dec. 1923.

Deyo, Simeon (1890), 436.

Walling map 1858, Walker atlas 1880 "N. Howland".

Leonard, Andrea, Records of the Proprietors, 81, 97, 156.

Interviews with owner, Robert Kesten 7, 13 May 2009, former owner Alice Bunakis 18 May 2009..

Site visit by Robert Frazee 13 May 2009.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

[TOWN]

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Historical Narrative, cont'd:

The first known resident of the house was John⁶ Howland (1768-1851), direct descendant and namesake of the Mayflower Pilgrim (David⁵, John⁴, Isaac³, John²⁻¹). We know only that he was a yeoman farmer, and that in 1798 he married his third cousin Martha⁶ Howland (Nathaniel⁵, Jabez⁴, Shubael³, John¹⁻²) which may have brought together Howland land holdings in the Plains. The house was inherited by his son Nathaniel⁷ (1813-96), who began as a ship's carpenter in Mattapoisett, Stonington and New Bedford, but returned to his father's farming. In the 1880 fair he won an award for his Crawford peaches. The local Literary Club met here, as did the Plains Glee Club in which he sang bass. In 1884 he made major improvements in the old homestead, including new windows. In 1838 he married Dorinda Fish, daughter of Capt. Anselm and Temperance Fish of Sandwich. They had four children, Darius, Martha T., Edwin T. and David Weston, who died at age 16. On Nathaniel's death in 1896 he was the oldest male parishioner of the West Barnstable church.

The house and land were inherited by his only daughter Martha T. (1846-1923) and his son Edwin⁸ T. Howland (1849-1918). Edwin continued his father's farming, applying liberal quantities of guano and Canadian ashes, producing onions, turnips, corn and strawberries. He expanded into cranberry cultivation in the 2 acre Skunknet bog (perhaps today's Weathervane Pond), the 9 acre Till Bog in Osterville and the small Lewis Bog. Active in civic affairs, he was forest fire warden from 1904 to 1916, president of the Fetch & Carry club which sponsored monthly singing and readings of current topics, also founding trustee of the West Barnstable Library, and leader in creating the James Otis memorial. He enjoyed showing off his "trotters" on Race Lane. On his death in 1918 he left a substantial estate mostly inherited by his maiden sister Martha. The house and land were appraised for \$2500.

Martha, a founding member of West Barnstable temperance union, died five years later. The homestead, barn and land were appraised at \$3500. Childless, her sole heir was her brother Darius's daughter "Lizzie" Elizabeth W. Titus, wife of Percy Titus, a Boston attorney, who lived in West Roxbury, and came here in summer. Immediately it was occupied by neighbor Abner I. Jones (1877-1955) who advertised that he smoked and cured hams here. After World War II Lizzie sold it in 1947 to the prominent West Yarmouth lawyer and banker A. Harold Castonguay (1905-79). He sold it shortly thereafter (1948) to the developer Edwin Ross Trafton (1912-1976) of Swampscott, who subdivided the Howland property, and probably rented the homestead.

Trafton sold it in 1953 to the Arata family of Somerville, of Italian origin. Lawrence "Larry", Robert and Louis ran an upholstery shop in the barn. In 1961 Larry was invited by Jackie Kennedy to upholster the furniture in the White House. There he met and married a secretary to Larry O'Brien. The Aratas sold the place in 1966 to John and Kathleen Devine of Weston, Ont.

In 1974 the Devines returned to Ireland and sold the house and barn on five acres for \$75,000 to Robert P. (1919-81) and Alice (b. 1924) Bukinis of Hyannis. He was a civil engineering graduate of MIT 1953 in charge of the Charles Savery surveying business. He enlarged the kitchen wing with a new chimney, and a greenhouse at the end. They opened an antique shop in the barn called Halfway Barn Treasures. They ran a farm here, with livestock and chickens, selling produce including eggs and goat cheese at a stand on Old Falmouth Rd. Alice was a waitress at the East Bay Lodge, owned by Robert G. Kesten (b. 1933). The Bunakises subdivided the back half and sold five lots. She sold the house and barn on 2.36 acres for \$125,000 to Kesten in 1982, and moved to a new house next door at #905.

In 1982 Kesten had Frank MacDonald build "Bob's Toy Chest", the new bow-roofed barn, for his workshop, as recorded on the adjoining property (124-044-002).

In 1997 he shared ownership with his third wife Christine Bania (b. 1952), proprietor of a needlepoint shop in Osterville, which was moved to the old barn in 2008, which had been separated from the homestead lot. They remodeled the house in 1997, adding the new bedroom and the garages.