

MAY 22 1989

604

AREA

FORM NO.

4

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

(Winchester, Mass. M.R.A.)
Town WINCHESTER

Address 201 Ridge Street

Historic Name Johnson-Thompson House

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Use: Present dwelling

Original dwelling

DESCRIPTION

Date circa 1750

Source structural analysis

Style Early Georgian

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric cedar shingle (1978)

Outbuildings two-story garage/barn/NC

Major Alterations (with dates) Kitchen & shed added, 1837; two rooms above kitchen added, 1916.

Condition Good

Moved No Date

Acreage 1.25 acres 26-0010

Setting Rural, on low hill overlooking valley to the southwest.

Recorded by Carol Ely, Bettina Cooper

Organization Winchester Historical Comm.

Date 1/79; revised by H. White 10/87

Formerly: 15 Ridge Street

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).

Indicate



UTM REFERENCE 19, 321000, 4701640

USGS QUADRANGLE LEXINGTON, MASS.

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Johnson-Thompson House is of major importance as the earliest extant structure in Winchester, with a construction date of circa 1750. It is further notable for its associations with the Johnson and Thompson families, prominent in local affairs (Woburn, then Winchester) from the time of the earliest settlement. The house has remained under the ownership of the descendants of the original occupant for over 270 years. Therefore the Johnson-Thompson House meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Johnson-Thompson House is conservative in size and design; its high, narrow profile and small dimensions typify dwellings of the mid eighteenth century. The Johnson-Thompson house demonstrates the transition from Colonial to Georgian building practices. A large framed opening in the center of the cellar indicates the former location of a massive central chimney, which was later eliminated, and replaced by twin rear wall chimneys. The central three-run stair follows the winding Colonial plan; despite the mid eighteenth century date, this earlier type of stair would still have been employed in outlying locations beyond Boston.

The house is characterized by simplicity, and like most houses of its time which still survive, it is found in an outlying locality where tastes were simple and budgets limited. As in most Georgian vernacular buildings, (inspired by English versions of the..... (continued)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The history of the Johnson-Thompson House has been carefully reconstructed by the present owner, Ralph Mead Thompson, a descendant of the original occupant. Mr. Thompson has in his possession deeds, letters, and other documents which relate the history of the house and its occupants. In addition, Mr. Thompson, who is ninety-two years of age at this time, has written a voluminous history of his family and the area.

Although some of the documents in the possession of the owner, and deeds on file at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds refer to a house at this location as early as 1711 or 1713, the present house presents no physical evidence that could support a date earlier than 1750. The house referred to in the deeds of 1711 and 1713 was said to have been built by William Johnson, a Medford shipwright, or his son Josiah Johnson 3rd, a housewright. The land on which the house stood was sold to Wm. Johnson by Isaac Cole and Wm. Pratt in 1673, part of a land grant by Charlestown.

A deed of 1713 (MD-17-21) from Josiah Johnson, "...Husbandman, to his nephew Wm. Johnson...grants him a right-of-way..." from present-day Cambridge Street to "...Apple Tree Hill," and it refers to Josiah's "new dwelling house." This is the first specific reference to a building on this site. Josiah Johnson (1669-1739) was the seventh child of Major Wm. Johnson and Esther Wiswall. Major Johnson was eminent in the military and political life of early Woburn and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. (continued)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Deeds and documents in possession of owner, and at Middlesex Registry of Deeds (cited in text).

Interviews with Ralph Thompson, Aug. 1978, Oct. 1978, and Oct. 1987.

History of Winchester, H. Chapman, 1936, pp.52-54, 68,70, 73-77, 79, 80, 104.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Winchester

Form No:

4

Property Name: Johnson-Thompson

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below. House

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE continued,

Italian Renaissance), facades were symmetrical, windows were double hung, and the eaves were boxed to form a Classical cornice.

Only two Winchester houses built during the eighteenth century survive: the Gardner-Swan House (circa 1764, #22) at 89 Cambridge Street, and the Johnson-Thompson House (circa 1750, #4). The Johnson-Thompson House was built for a prosperous farmer; its Early Georgian design is typical of farmhouses in Middlesex County dating from the pre-Revolutionary period, with its gambrel roof, projecting boxed eaves, and projecting cornice.

The Johnson-Thompson House retains considerable original and early material on the interior. It follows a two-room central hall plan, with a central three-run stair. Family tradition states that the room on the right was built first, with the left-hand room added at a later date. This was a common building practice, to expand a one-room end-chimney dwelling into a two-room central chimney house. If this was the case in the Johnson-Thompson House, it would mean that the main downstairs room originally served for cooking as well as for living, a true "hall" in the Medieval (and Colonial) sense.

There are two rooms on the second floor, and an attic under the gambrel roof. The kitchen ell is known to have been added, along with a shed in 1837. At that time the roof was extended to form a salt-box profile. A fireplace opening into the kitchen was later bricked over, although a wood-burning stove is presently fused into this flue. In 1916 the shed was moved to another location on the property where it still stands. At that time upstairs rooms were built over the kitchen. The enclosed entrance vestibule may be original.

The framing members are not massive, and the summer beams and corner posts are encased. The joists have been plastered over; walls and ceilings are also plastered. Window and door frames are flush with the plaster. Ceiling heights are approximately seven feet.

From the cellar, the width of the early floorboards can be seen: some are nearly three feet wide, each cut from the center of a great tree. Looking at them explains why the earliest name of this section of Winchester was Pine Mountain. According to the present owner, when the roof shingles were removed circa 1978, twenty-two inch wide, bark-covered shingles were revealed underneath. At the same time (circa 1978) the clapboards were removed, and replaced with shingles. This exposed three-by-four-inch red oak studs, and mortise-and-tenon joints on the corner posts. The owner believes that the present paired double hung windows on the facade

continued

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Winchester

Form No:

4

Property Name: Johnson/Thompson House

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE continued,

Major William Johnson was the Woburn Town Clerk for 16 years, a member of the General Court, and twice an Assistant to the Governor. Johnson was removed from this office during the regime of Sir Edmund Andros, who was sent to New England by King James II to subjugate the colony's independent tendencies. While Andros remained in Massachusetts, Johnson was a member of the "Council for the Safety of The People," which opposed King James's policies. When Andros was deposed in 1689, Johnson was reinstated as an Assistant to the Governor.

Major Johnson was a wealthy man for the times; he owned nine hundred acres of land, much of it in present-day Burlington, formerly a part of Woburn. Major Johnson's house stood on present-day Cambridge Street, near the intersection with Wildwood Street. A number of his descendants continued to live in the vicinity.

The second owner of the house was Josiah Johnson 4th, (1710-1784), the third child of Josiah 3rd. Josiah 4th was a lawyer and practiced farming as well. He inherited a part of the land in 1739, and bought the share of his brother Giles in 1743 (MD 79-460). Josiah 4th was a Captain during the Revolutionary War.

Josiah 5th acquired the house from his father, and served as a sergeant in the military during the Revolutionary War, under his father's command.

Levi and Ezekiel Johnson inherited the farm from their father, Josiah 5th. Ezekiel built the house at 202 Ridge Street (1821) at the time of his marriage. Levi continued to live in the house at 201 Ridge Street. The brothers were wheelwrights, and continued to farm the land jointly. Levi was also a road surveyor for the town of Woburn.

In 1858 the property passed to the Thompson family, through the marriage of Timothy Thompson (of Maine) to Caroline Johnson. In 1870, at the time of Caroline's death, Timothy married her sister Elizabeth, who agreed to the marriage so that the property might remain in her family. In 1881, the Johnson property passed to Timothy's son, William Levi Thompson (1859-1954).

The present owner, Ralph Mead Thompson, a son of Wm. Levi Thompson, assumed the title to the property in 1947, along with a \$10,000 mortgage. In 1966, Ralph M. Thompson was forced to sell off nearly all the land surrounding the house, in order to pay the taxes levied when the town began a policy of 100% valuation on real estate.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Winchester	Form No: 4
Property Name: Johnson-Thompson	

House

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE continued,

are the type that have always been used.

The cellar windows contain early sash frame (the only early sash frame in the house), with ten-and-one-half inch by twenty-two-and one-half inch lights, an uncommon dimension. The bases of the twin rear-wall chimneys are supported on brick piers with a cross girt. The foundation consists of five feet of fieldstone topped by two feet of brick, suggesting that the house was later raised on its foundation. The cross-beams have been braced by posts which are sections of trees.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

MAY 22 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Winchester MRA
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 21. Gardner, O.W. House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 22. Ginn Gardener's House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 23. Grover, Henry, House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 24. Hovey--Winn House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 25. Hutchinson--Blood House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 26. Johnson--Thompson House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 27. Jones, Marshall W., House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 28. Locke, Asa, House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 29. Mann, James H., House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |
| 30. Mason, John, House | Entered in the
National Register | f Keeper <u>Helene Byers 7/5/89</u> |
| | | Attest _____ |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Johnson--Thompson House
NAME:

MULTIPLE Winchester MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 5/22/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/06/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/22/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/06/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000604

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 7/5/89 DATE Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ applicable criteria
☐ justification of areas checked
☐ relating significance to the resource
☐ context
☐ relationship of integrity to significance
☐ justification of exception
☐ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTMs ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed _____ Phone _____

Date _____



Johnson - Thompson House
201 Ridge St. 1/88
Winchester, Ma MRA

MHC
Inv. #4

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000303