

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC John Ward House

AND/OR COMMON
John Ward House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
132 Essex Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Salem

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
6th

STATE
Massachusetts

CODE
25

COUNTY CODE
Essex 009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Essex Institute

STREET & NUMBER
132 Essex Street

CITY, TOWN
Salem

__ VICINITY OF

STATE
Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Essex Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Salem

STATE
Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1910</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The following description is taken from an article by Barbara and Gerald Ward entitled "The John Ward House; A Social and Architectural History," published in the January 1974 issue of the Essex Institute Historical Collections.

As it stands now, the John Ward House is a jumble of features dating from the original construction of the house and from the period of restoration. Tradition has always held, and evidence in the framing would seem to indicate, that the house was built by John Ward in three steps between 1684 and 1732. An eastern wing was added to the house in the nineteenth century, but was removed prior to 1905, probably before the end of the nineteenth century.

The Ward House, which now faces east, was built facing south, like most seventeenth-century houses. Compass directions are given as though the house were still in its original location. Thus, the rooms designated as "western" are now to the left of the front door, "eastern" to the right, when facing the house.

Phase one of John Ward's building effort was a simple two-story end-chimney structure, with an entryway and what became the upper and lower western rooms. The brick fill of what used to be an outside wall is still visible in the stairway which now divides the house, and mortises for studs are visible in the former end girt of the original section. This lower western room, now designated as the parlor, is framed mainly in pine. Traces of whitewash can be seen in the two large summer beams and posts, as well as traces of a blue paint. Dow has left a small bit of the ceiling as it appeared at restoration, showing the various paint layers that were removed at that time. The topmost layer is a gray-blue, which would be the color they discovered on the walls in 1910.

The north-south summers and the posts are decorated with chamfering. The floor boards and joists seem to be a combination of old and new materials, but it seems that, on the whole, Dow preserved a good deal of the framing in this room. The fireplace lintel is definitely new, and so are several floorboards of the room above. Most of the joists show evidence of the lath which was nailed to them, some show whitewash and paint, and a number appear to have been turned over at restoration. The summer beams are a darker color above where they were covered by lath and plaster, which is what we would expect from original members. The only obvious place where part of a major frame member has been repaired is the post holding the chimney girt, next to the door leading into the entry way. Part of the original post has been lost, and a new section of wood has been pieced into the original. None of the timber in this room seems to have been pit-sawn, as it all has the more regular marks of the mill saw. The summer beams are hewn.

The original back door, now leading to the lean-to, is still there in a corner of the lower western room. The floor boards in front of this door show great evidence of use, and it seems safe to assume that they are early, if not original boards. There is no way

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1684

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Ward House, probably built around 1684, retains much of its original frame and fabric making it a little altered example of a 17th century organic growth frame house of medieval design. It is also a good example of an important early instance of restoration and preservation in America.

HISTORY

The John Ward House was situated on the east side of Prison Lane, later known as St. Peter Street. The property was originally granted to Christopher Waller in 1649 who sold it to a James Browne in 1664. At Browne's death in 1676 the land was divided into three parts. John Ward bought each section separately from various owners and by 1696 had purchased the last part. He bought the center section where he built his house in 1682.

Ward's gravestone, still visible in the Charter Street Burying Ground, indicates he was born around 1653. He was a currier by profession, which involved taking roughly tanned leather and making it soft and pliable for commercial purposes.

His son Benjamin, a mariner, inherited half the house at his father's death in 1732 and may have already been sharing the house with his parents since his marriage in 1724. At his death in 1774 the house seems to have passed to his son Benjamin. He had built a house of his own in 1763 and the Ward House may have been rented from that time. At his death in 1806 he willed the house to his sister who died in 1809. Her will underwent seven years probate and in 1816 the house was sold at public auction to Temple Hardy. For the next forty years it was both a bakery and house for Hardy.

In 1853 the house was sold to Stephen B. Ives and for the next fifty years it was a multi-unit tenement. In 1887 the lands passed to the County of Essex which remained slum landlords for the next twenty-three years.

As early as 1890 the property had been offered to the Essex Institute to save it from destruction but no action was taken for twenty years. The county wanted the property for a new jail and wished the house moved. In 1910 the Ward house was moved to newly purchased land fronting on Brown Street at the rear of the Institute. In 1912, under the direction of George Dow, the house received a fairly sympathetic restoration with some care in seeking out structural evidence, often leaving visible indications of work done and evidence used.

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of determining just how long this door was used. At some point in history it proved inadequate and was replaced by the wider door now next to it. When one opens the old door, old boarding can be seen around the edges of the door casing.

The front door is a reproduction of an old batten door, based on a chunk of what was apparently an older door found in 1910. The staircase in the entryway is also a reproduction. The western bed-chamber, not open to the public, is nearly identical with the lower room, with the exception of having a smaller fireplace.

Phase two of construction was the eastern half, framed mainly in oak. When this section was completed, the house formed the usual central chimney with center staircase floor plan. The eastern downstairs room contains only one principal girt, or summer, and is a smaller room, designated now as the kitchen. Again, many of the timbers appear to be original. The end girt of the original part of the house, although pieced, is still in place. The fireplace lintel is again new, and some floorboards and joists have been replaced. It seems likely that the cellar was added at the same time as these eastern rooms, as the door to it is located on this side of the house. The eastern bedchamber looks much like it must have in 1910, with the ceiling still plastered and faded wallpaper on the walls, and has not been restored to any degree.

We have no way of knowing what the condition of the chimney was when Dow restored the building, so it is difficult to know whether the lower eastern room or the lean-to was built as a kitchen. The batten door from the eastern room to the lean-to shows evidence of having once had heavy bolts used to lock it. These may have been removed at the time of restoration.

The lean-to was added as the third and final step of John Ward's building program sometime before 1732, as it is mentioned in his will at that time. It was detached when the house was moved for restoration, and when the later plaster was removed some original, or at least quite old, clapboards on what used to be an exterior wall came to light.

The house has a wide overhang, which extends only along the front and western end of the building. It is framed so that the girts provide the width of the overhang, and therefore extend considerably beyond the first floor posts.

The two front gables, removed during the history of the house, were replaced during the restoration, and evidence seems to indicate that this was a legitimate step. Benjamin may have removed the gables when he inherited the house, to make its exterior more fashionable.

Some of the rafters are numbered with builder's marks, moving from west to east. The whole roof shows signs of having been extensively reworked during the restoration, and for that reason presents an interesting problem. The end gables lack studs mortised

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into the rafters; it looks as though the boards bracing these ends may have been nailed on in the nineteenth century. The original, western end bay is now gone, apparently replaced in 1910. Many of the roof boards were replaced during the history of the house, as well as at restoration. There is a roof window now lighting the stairs to the attic, but whether there was evidence sanctioning this at restoration is unknown.

The nineteenth-century wing, added to the eastern end of the house, is now lost and can be studied only through photographs that are for the most part undated. It may have been built by Temple Hardy after 1816. It was taken down before 1905, perhaps at the time the county purchased the building 1887, as the number of tenants decreased in 1889.

In 1910, then, the John Ward House stood considerably altered. It was painted yellow on the exterior, the gables had been removed, all the windows were double-hung sash, seemingly dating from different periods. The whole building had a new brick foundation, and a plain central chimney top was visible.

As we have seen, the county offered the Ward House to the Institute as early as 1890, although no action was taken for some years. In 1905, President Appleton of the Institute indicated an interest in preserving an ancient dwelling of Salem, to be placed on the Institute grounds, presenting a picture of seventeenth-century life. With the acquisition of some land fronting on Brown Street, behind the Institute, and the removal of some wooden buildings and a skating rink from the property, the location for such a project was finally available. In 1908 and 1909, final steps were taken to save the Ward House.

In the spring of 1910, the Institute acquired the house, and sixteen benefactors paid the William G. Edwards Building Mover and Contractor Company \$250 to move the Ward House from its original location to the grounds of the Institute, a short distance of about two blocks. Dow then spent a good deal of time and money altering it to meet his conceptions of seventeenth-century architecture, furnishings, and domestic life.

Dow's main plan was straightforward. Originally, he meant to restore the two large downstairs rooms in the "17th century manner." Later he decided instead that they should be done in an "early 18th century manner," but by 1912 he had settled on "1700" as the date for interior furnishings. This may explain why he chose eighteenth-century wainscot sheathing for these rooms. Despite these changes in dating, his plan for the layout of the house never varied. One room would be the kitchen, and the other the hall or parlor. The lean-to was to contain three separate exhibits: a weaving room, an apothecary shop, and an "Old Salem" cent shop. The upstairs was to be used as quarters for the guides, who were to be dressed in period costumes. Each room was to be furnished with appropriate museum artifacts, but in 1912 Dow explained that "Where original furniture or utensils of the period have not been available, reproductions have been made." Gardens would

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surround the house, and a well curb with a long sweep was placed outside. The whole display, Dow said, would be "highly successful, giving much of an atmosphere of live-ability."

Many of the workmen were rehired for the restoration of the Parson Capen House in 1913. It is worth noting that these early twentieth-century workmen had more influence on the way we view seventeenth-century architecture than is perhaps acknowledged.

In 1911 and early 1912, the weaving room, apothecary shop, and cent shop were opened to the public. The apothecary shop was supplied with goods purchased at the sale of the estate of Dr. William Webb in 1901, a Salem apothecary active in 1830. In an article on the apothecary shop, Dow stated that such exhibits existed in Europe, and he was very proud that the Institute could have one as well. He felt that this display of Webb's shop was the first of its kind in America, a fact which helps explain why he chose to incorporate it within the Ward House lean-to. The cent shop, with its Gibralters, penny candy, and other small items, drew its inspiration from the tradition of such shops in Salem. Hawthorne gave a mighty boost to one such shop in The House of Seven Gables.

With the exception that the guides are no longer required to wear period dress, the Ward House exhibition has changed very little from 1912 to this day. After a period of decline, it was cleaned and rehabilitated in 1961-1962 during the administration of Dean A. Fales, Jr., but only minor switching of objects occurred.