HISTORIC GROUNDS REPORT

HARTWELL TAVERN

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

By

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assemble and interpret all of the known information concerning the grounds of the Hartwell Tavern. Because the basic documents contain few details that relate to the buildings and other cultural features and their location, a certain degree of conjecture will be apparent in the following narrative.

The immediate objective of this study is to provide background information for an archeological examination of the subject grounds, and it is hoped that it will serve that purpose.
Brief History of the Hartwell Tavern Property

The Hartwells of Middlesex County migrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony from Buckinghamshire, England, sometime during the fourth decade of the 17th century. The immigrants were William and his wife Jasan, who were the parents of three children: John, born in 1640; Samuel, born in 1645; and Marthe [Martha], born in 1649. Samuel's oldest child was born in 1666 and named for his father. Sometime prior to his marriage in 1692, Samuel, Junior, acquired through an unrecorded deed property along the road between Lexington and Concord in the portion of eastern Concord that was later included in the new Lincoln Township. He lived there in what later was called the Sergeant Samuel Hartwell House until his death in 1744.

Samuel, Junior's youngest son, Ephraim, was born on January 14, 1707. He learned the cordwainer's [shoemaker] trade, and when he was twenty-six years old, his father made him a gift of real estate in the towns of Concord and Bedford. One of these properties was described in the following manner:

3. Variously called the "Country Road," "County Road," and "Bay Road"; now termed the "Battle Road."
Eighteen acres of woodland an upland lying in the easterly part of Said Concord bounded westerly on land of Ebenezer Brooks northerly on Saml Brooks, Easterly on my own land and southerly on the Road containing a new Dwelling house and also free liberty of a way to my barn to use and improve forever the northerly end of it being a new addition unto it made by Ephraim Hartwell." 

It is with this parcel that this study is concerned.

The 1773 deed of gift obviously contains little information about the eighteen-acre parcel's character beyond describing it as woodland and upland [meadow] and that a house had recently been built on it. No barn had yet been raised, because Ephraim received "free liberty of a way to my barn . . . the northerly end of it being a new addition unto it made by Ephraim Hartwell."

Samuel died in 1744 and Ephraim was named executor and inherited all of his father's land in Concord, with dower rights for Samuel's widow Experience in one-half the lands, one-half the barn, and the easterly end of the older Hartwell house [Sergeant Samuel Hartwell House].

Ephraim was a thrifty, industrious man, and by 1754, official documents called him a "gentleman" rather than "cordwainer" or "yeoman," as earlier papers labeled him. The Court of General Sessions for Middlesex County granted him an innkeeper's license in 1756; and he may

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6. Middlesex County Probate No. 10587, Samuel Hartwell, 1774, item no. 1, Will.
have had an inn in 1775, but the records do not list the licensees after 1772. An innkeeper's license permitted its holder to provide food, drink, and overnight accommodations in contrast to a license for a tavern that limited services to providing food and drink, especially alcoholic beverages. Thus the term Hartwell Tavern is a misnomer that is of recent origin. No 18th-century reference to such a tavern has been located. The hostelry was more likely called Hartwell's Inn, or it may have had no particular title other than a local identification.

Keeping an inn probably required Ephraim Hartwell to make some changes in the physical appearance of his home property if he had not already added these buildings. While he originally used his father's old barn to which he had added the northern portion before 1733, he probably erected one closer to his home before his father's death in 1744. This was certainly the case if, as the deeds indicate, he sold the old Hartwell house to John Brown and bought it back between 1744 and 1750. The presence of a barn certainly became a necessity in 1756, when Ephraim began to serve travelers. His guests needed a stable for their horses, and convenience and comfort would have argued for one near the inn.

Ephraim's son Samuel, who came to be called "Sargeant Samuel" because of his rank in the Lincoln minute company, occupied his grand-

8. Middlesex County, Records of the Court of General Sessions, 1756-1772.
father's old house by 1764. This enforces the assumption that Ephraim had a barn on his lot by the end of the 1760s.

Taking 1775 as the historic year, we can try to conjecture what kind of an establishment Ephraim Hartwell had by that time. While he was an innkeeper, he and his son John, who lived with him, were primarily farmers. In fact, the Lincoln tax record for 1774 shows that he had twenty acres of crop land [tillage], the largest in the township, where the average was approximately six acres. His personal property, for which he was assessed £37, included one horned bull, six oxen, [three yokes], ten cows, five sheep, and four hogs. John Hartwell was taxed that year £2 for a horse and an ox; and Isaac, another son living with him, had a horse. Ephraim's assessment was the highest in that part of Lincoln, but not so high as that of some of his neighbors on the Concord side of the town boundary.

Ephraim's 1774 assessment for real estate was £71, a high figure for the neighborhood that indicates that he not only had a good house and an active farm but also a number of buildings. The tax assessments for 1778 and 1779 showed effects of the appearance of the new Massachusetts currency and war-time inflation. Ephraim's assessments for 1778 were: real estate £1000, personal property £662. Thereafter,

10. Lincoln Tax Record, 1764.
11. Ibid., 1774.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid; Concord Tax Record, 1774.
15. Ibid., 1778; 1779.
the assessments were lowered, and from 1784 until Ephraim's death, his taxes remained relatively stable, although John's increased from 1790 as he assumed more of the accountability for his father's estate. 16

Ephraim gradually relinquished the operations of his farm and property to John. He died in May 7, 1793, in his 87th year. 17 By his will, written on January 25, 1786, he gave his widow one-third of his dwelling house and cellar along with "the priviledge of the well, House-yard&c." and provided for her maintenance. John received the house, except for the third reserved to the widow, all of the other buildings, and all of the real estate in Lincoln, except that portion given Samuel, including the house in which the latter lived. 18 The estate's inventory valued the home at £150 and "Barn & other out houses" at £15.

From these scanty and imprecise records and from inferences based upon Ephraim's and John's economic activities and station, one can develop a conjectural picture of the grounds of their home. In 1774, the year closest to the historic period for which there is a tax record, the family had three horses, six oxen, ten cows, five sheep, and four swine. These animals required fairly extensive accommodations in the form of a barn for the storage of winter feed and a stable, preferably adjacent, for the shelter of the stock during the long, fairly severe New England winters. There was also a need for shelter for the horses

16. Ibid., 1770-1792.
18. Middlesex County Probate No. 108560, Ephraim Hartwell, 1793.
of the guests who patronized the inn. Thus a large barn with a stable in the lower story was certainly a feature of the property. Since swine were not housed with other animals, a pig-house was another facility. Although chickens and other fowls were not included in the list of personal property, they were part of the stock of every farm [as well as the property of townspeople], and a house was provided for them. Ducks, geese, and chickens usually roamed at will, but the cold winters imposed a need for at least a rudimentary shelter. In addition to the barn-stable, pig-house, and chicken house, there may have been other sheds and buildings required for a wagon, and farm tools.19 A post-war deed mentions a well near the "back door of the sink room" and "well yard as it is called at the west end of . . . house and woodhouse, as now walled in, containing one third of an acre" that may have dated from the 1770s.20 The same deed mentions a wood house, which may also date from the same period or have replaced one that did.

John Hartwell, who had been a sergeant, lieutenant, and captain in the local militia, inherited Ephraim's house and 68-acre house lot along with other real estate.21 This property became known as the Deacon

19. Mary Hartwell, Samuel's wife, recalled that her father-in-law Ephraim collected the bodies of British soldiers killed near the Hartwell houses and transported them to the Lincoln Burying Ground in this wagon. Frank Wilson Charny Hersey, Heroes of the Battle Road. Lexington, 1930, 23, 30.
John Hartwell Farm and was identified in that manner in two 19th century deeds. 22 John added to his farm when he bought the old Joseph Mason property that had abutted Ephraim's house-lot on the west since 1753. 23 In spite of this addition to his real estate, John's farming activity did not represent any appreciable expansion, and his taxes remained fairly stable. 24 John died intestate in 1820, and no probate papers were filed on his estate. 25

The best clue to the character of the property at the end of John's life is found in the tax records for 1821. That source lists a dwelling for which his heirs were assessed $12.00, a barn assessed at $15.00, and two unidentified buildings assessed at $2.00. The estate owned one horse, five cows, and a chaise, the last valued at $25.00. 26 The value of the house was half that of the older Samuel Hartwell House, but the barn was appraised at almost twice the value of Samuel's. 27 John apparently never kept an inn, and his economic activity was limited to farming.

As has been noted, John died intestate and for nearly eighteen years his property remained intact under the ownership of his heirs. His widow Hepsibah died on March 13, 1837, and his four children began

27. Ibid.
to divide their father's estate in 1838, when John, his sister Sarah, and Sarah's husband, Abijah Hoare Pierce, released certain privileges concerning the Ephraim Hartwell house and yard to John's daughter Lydia. The deed that recorded that transaction included the following description:

... the west, or that part of the dwelling house formerly occupied by the late widow Hepzibah [sic] Hartwell with one room on the lower floor in the main or old house, which was occupied by said widow, with the cellar under west or new part of the house as aforesaid, and also the sink room, wood house, chaise house and all the new additions except the corn chamber in the same as far as is now used for that purpose, to where the floor is planned [sic]. Also the use of the well yard as it is called at the west end of said house and woodhouse, as now walled in, containing about one-third of an acre, more or less and also the use in common of the yard front of said house, to the road.

During the next eighteen years, Abijah Hoare Pierce gradually bought up the interests of the other heirs of John Hartwell until, by 1856, he owned all of the farm. These transactions are summarized as follows:

Book:382:324, Hannah Johnson to Lydia Hartwell, sold for $800 one undivided quarter part of the late Deacon John Hartwell Farm which was inherited and was situated in Lincoln and Bedford.

June 12, 1839

Book:387:398-99, John H. Hartwell to A. H. Pierce, sold for $800 one undivided quarter part of the farm or homestead of the late Deacon John Hartwell, excepting to Lydia for life the use of the well yard and the west end of the house.

Oct. 23, 1839

Book: 465:5, Lydia Hartwell to A. H. Pierce, sold for $1600 one undivided half part of all certain farm land and buildings situated in Lincoln called the Deacon John Hartwell Farm, reserving to Lydia Hartwell and Hannah Johnson the rights of deed Book: 382:323.

June 25, 1845

Book: 465:5-6, Abijah H. Pierce to Lydia Hartwell, sold for $1600 one undivided half part of the late Deacon John Hartwell Farm subject to reservations set forth; mortgage (note in margin—mortgage discharged July 15, 1854, see Book: 614:277)

Book: 732:517-18, Hannah Johnson to Abijah H. Pierce, sold for $800 one quarter part of the late Deacon John Hartwell Farm with certain reservations for life.

January 23, 1856

Less than three years after he gained title to the John Hartwell Farm, Pierce and his wife sold the farm to their son Samuel, who in turn, sold it to Stephan C. Hanscom on March 6, 1873. In 1875 Hanscom sold the property to Edward and Francis McHugh. Francis died in 1913, and the farm passed by will to Edward's widow Mary and her three children: Katherine, John E., and Margaret A. Reynolds. Mary died in 1927 and her will made the following provisions: 
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$9,000. On May 27, 1927, Katherine F. McHugh, executrix for her mother's estate, sold all but three acres of the farm to her brother John and his wife Mary. Mary owned the house and its farm until title passed to the U. S. Government.

The legal instruments that comprise the chain of title for the period contain no data that illuminate the subject of outbuildings, gardens, and fences.

A limited amount of information was obtained from Mrs. Mary McHugh by Architect Orville W. Carroll in an interview dated May 2, 1967. An important portion of the informant's reminiscences concerned the old barn that was destroyed by a hurricane in 1938, which she thought "must have been here when the place was built." She described it as being shingled with a cupola. She had no photographs of the old barn. The modern structure was erected over the floor of the older barn. In Mrs. McHugh's words: "The old barn was blown down in the 1938 hurricane to the floor. The floor was not taken down, it was the same size." An old shed that stood near the southwest corner and faced the east was also destroyed by the storm, but never replaced.

There is, of course, no way that the theory that the barn destroyed in 1938 was pre-Revolutionary vintage can be tested, except by an archaeological study that might recover datable remains of the structure.

32. Ibid., 16:556.
34. Interview with Mrs. McHugh, Minute Man NHP, May 2, 1967.
The informant had no expertise that would qualify her to identify an 18th century barn, and all that she knew concerning its age was derived through oral tradition from sources no better qualified than she was. There is little architectural information available beyond the fact that it was a large frame building over a stone stable section. The modern structure includes a stone lower story that appears to be smaller than an earlier feature, and the ground in front of this lower floor has a number of irregularities that suggest that the other building extended farther west.

The 20th century grounds included a shed that was old when Mrs. McHugh moved into the house, but the information concerning it is too scanty to support any conclusions concerning its provenance. Other structures included a hog-house and chicken-house of uncertain vintage, foundations of which are probably among those that are discernible on the grounds.

As is obvious from the contents of this report, the documents are of very limited value as sources of information about the Hartwell Tavern's grounds. We can be certain that there was a barn, a wood house, a chase house, and at least two other unidentified buildings at various times during the first century of the house's existence. No legal documents provide clues to later buildings. Three diagrammatic renderings have been attached to this report that attempt to illustrate the layout of the historic house and its dependencies.

It may be conjectured that a stone wall stood in front of the property along the road's right-of-way. Another wall surrounded the well yard west of the house by the fourth decade of the 19th century and possibly earlier. Other walls or fences would have set apart the barn-lot,
garden, and hog-pen. Once again, the documents are silent, except with respect to the small yard west of the house.

It is hoped that the information presented in this study will be useful to the park's staff, the archeologists, and planners in preserving and interpreting the Hartwell property.
C - Was the ceiling of the clutter room like the kitchen before the kitchen ceiling was changed?

MM - It must have been. Aren't they short people.

McHugh Ditch (Bridge gone)

McHugh Hen House (ca. 1925)

Barn above 1st floor destroyed in 1938 hurricane
Rebuilt by McHugh

Corn field
(McHugh)

Shed destroyed ca. 1938

Stones wall

Stone wall

McHugh maple

Cess pool drain field

McHugh Hen House (ca. 1940)

Cess pool

Cess pool

Shed torn down about 1925, used for tools storage in 1922

Stone wall removed by Mrs. McHugh

20th century
Epitheim Hartwell Tavern
Lincoln, Massachusetts
SOURCES

Manuscript


Public Records

Concord, Massachusetts, Tax Records, Town Clerk's Office.
Lincoln, Massachusetts, Tax Records, Town Clerk's Office.
Middlesex County (Mass.) Registry of Deeds.
Middlesex County (Mass.) Probate Records.
Middlesex County (Mass.) Records of the Court of General Sessions.

Published Primary Sources

Vital Records of Lincoln, Massachusetts, To the Year 1850, (Boston, 1908).

Interview


Park Service Study