TAVERNS OF SWANSEA
AND
HOMES ON NATIONAL REGISTRY
NOT IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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Swansea Historical Society

Our last talk covered homes and buildings on the National Registry in Historic Districts here in Swansea. Today, we will cover homes and taverns of Swansea on the National Registry that are not in Historic Districts.

I have asked Karen Bowen, our Vice President, to talk later about her home that was built in 1752: The John Brown IV House.

By The Numbers

The Town of Swansea currently has:

- 184 buildings, sites and structures on the National Registry
- 5 historic districts
- 77 structures that do not qualify to be on the National Registry
- Hundreds of structures that were never researched

Sandra Clark put together a presentation on Taverns of Swansea for the society's website a few years back. Since that information was posted, we have come across information on a few other homes that were also taverns here in Swansea.

What are Taverns?



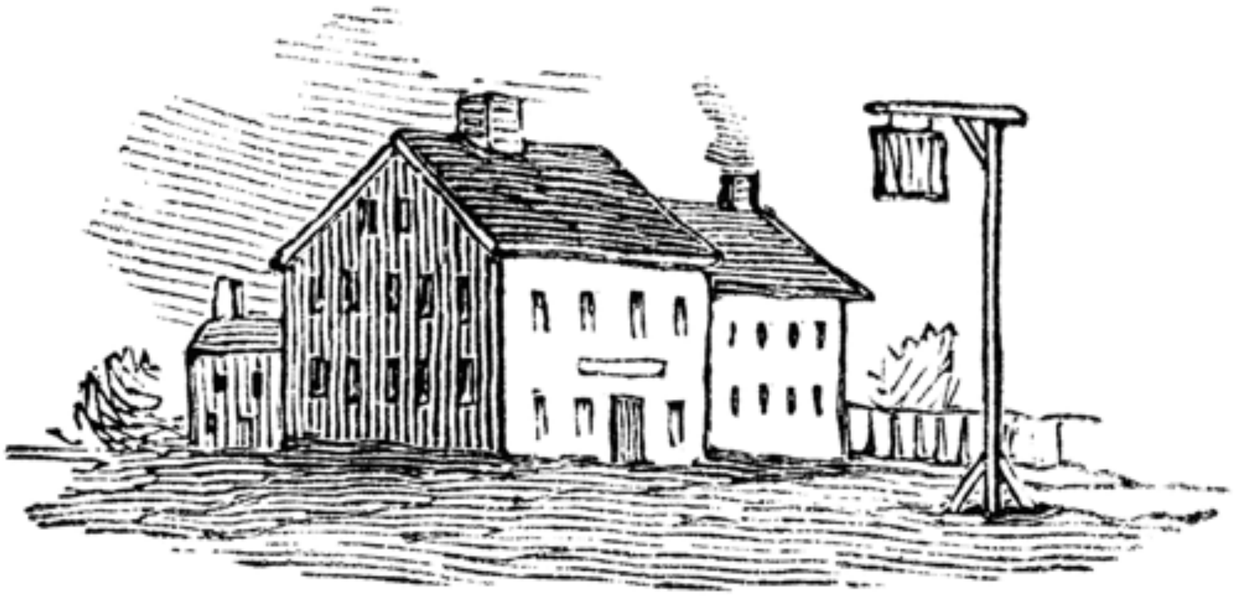
Taverns in the Puritan Commonwealth were usually located near meeting houses in order to provide food and drink to church goers during the break between the Sunday morning and afternoon sermons.

When you mention taverns, most people think of a neighborhood bar where you would gather to drink alcohol and pass the time.

In colonial times and in the 1800s,

taverns where much more than a neighborhood bar.

As travel increased in the 17th and 18th centuries, inns were built along heavily traveled roadways and important road junctions.



In 17th century New England, the term “inn” usually indicated that lodging was available along with food and drink.

The term “tavern” was more for a drinking establishment.

Early New England taverns and inns were often small two-story wood structures with four rooms and a second building that could be divided into three or more rooms, including a kitchen behind a massive center chimney. Both rooms were used as a bar room, tap room, storage and kitchen areas.

The tavern and inn owner and his family would live in the rooms not utilized for business operations.

Most tavern and inn owners were also farmers. This helped with the culinary needs of the businesses and families.

Taverns were not only for food and lodging but for consumption of alcohol and the exchange of horses. The taverns and inns were also used as stagecoach stations.

Taverns of Swansea

- Short’s Tavern
- Old Tavern on Milford Road
- Luther’s Tavern
- Graham’s Tavern
- Pearse Road Inn/Tavern
- The Hull House/Tavern

Short’s Tavern

The first tavern is the Short’s Tavern, located at 282 Market Street. The build date is estimated to be 1742. The original house and buildings were built in 1685, owned by John Therber, willed to his son Thomas Therber, then to Thomas’s daughter, Charity, and her husband, Thomas Whalley.

282 Market Street faces west on a primary north-south route through Old Swansea, running between the present towns of Rehoboth and Warren.

Short’s Tavern

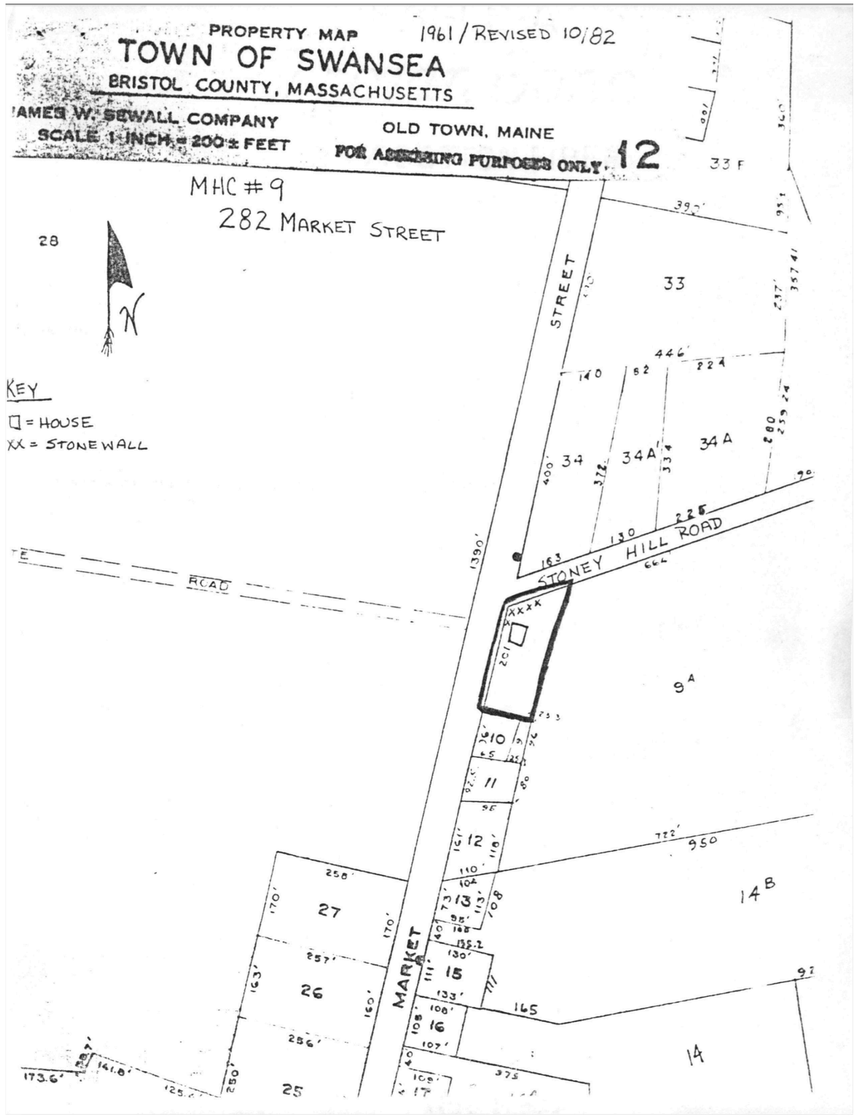




Short’s Tavern

Due to the location of the property, James Short purchased the house, building and 40 acres of land in 1851. He turned the house into Short’s Tavern. The Tavern was situated on a direct county highway running from Warren to Providence. It was just west of Myles Bridge where the Barneyville shipyard flourished on the Palmer River. There is little known about James Short and the Tavern. A back addition with two large beehive ovens was demolished in 1979.

Short's Tavern



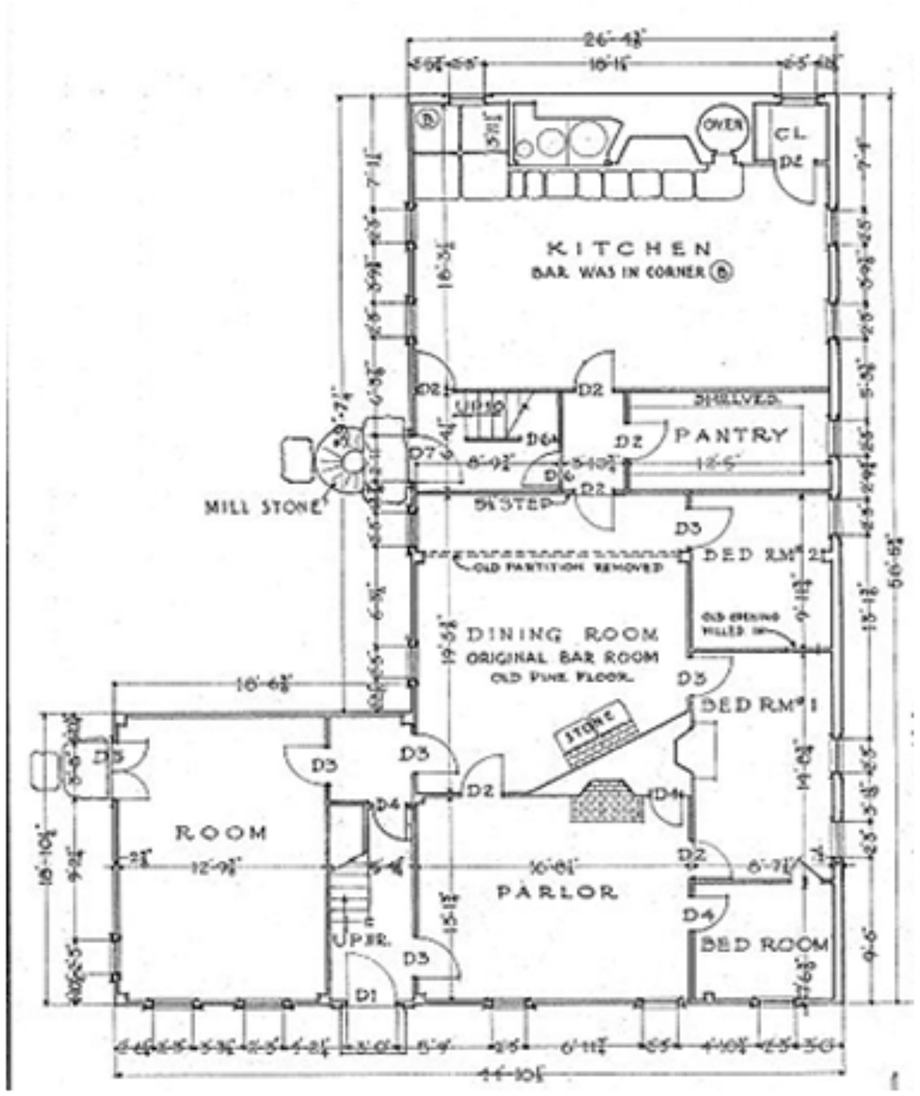
Old Tavern at Milford Road

The second tavern is the Old Tavern at Milford Road.The following pictures and information came from the Historic American Buildings Survey performed in April, 1934. The first floor consisted of a kitchen, pantry, dining room, two large parlors and three bedrooms. The second floor consisted of a kitchen/living room, a pantry, a large ball room and seven bedrooms.

Old Tavern at Milford Road



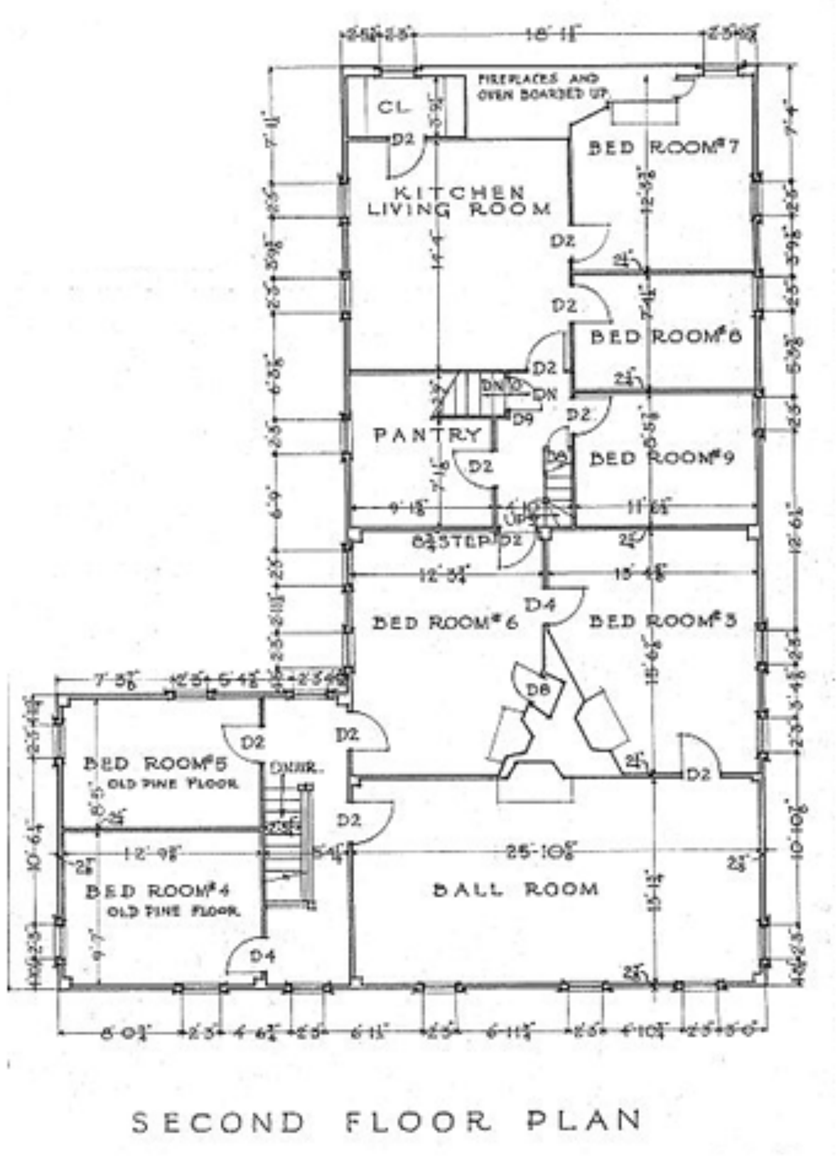
Old Tavern at Milford Road



The first floor consisted of three bedrooms with a fireplace in the middle bedroom, a parlor, a dining room (location of original bar room), kitchen/pantry, main fireplace and a sitting room with an outdoor access.

It was noted that the first floor was wall-to-wall old pine flooring.

Old Tavern at Milford Road



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

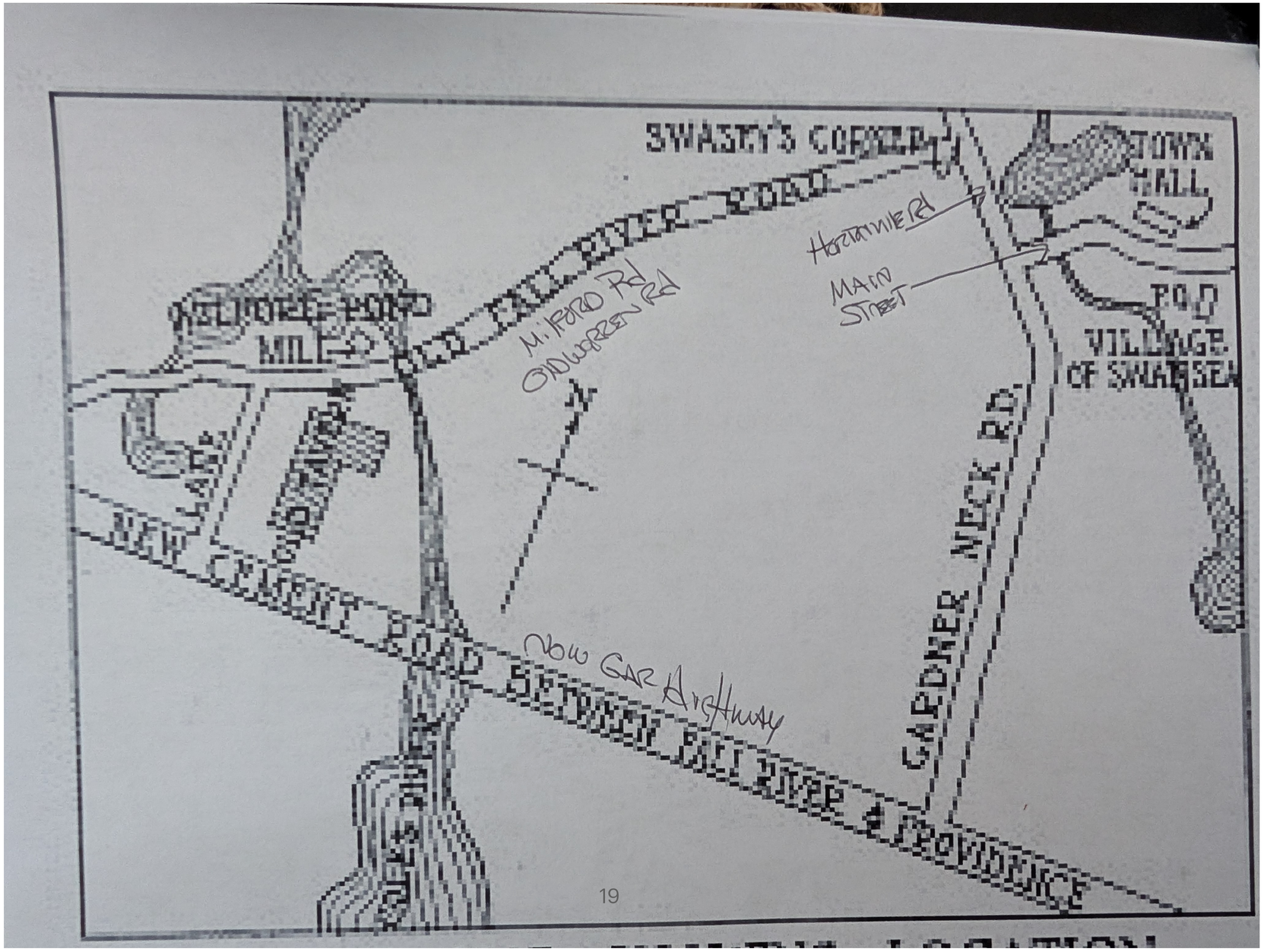
The second floor had an additional six bedrooms with three fireplaces, a kitchen/pantry and a ball room.

The second story, like the first floor, had wall-to-wall old pine flooring.

Old Tavern at Milford Road

Word of mouth history tells us that the Old Tavern on Milford Road closed in the early 1900s. In 1924, it was purchased by the Borges family and turned into a sand and gravel company. The Borges family sold the property to Kmart in 1973. The tavern was demolished at that time. It has been told that doors, windows, bricks and other pieces were sold and used on other historical properties in town. The Luther Store was one of the properties that utilized pieces of this historic property. The wall on the back addition was built with the bricks from the Old Tavern on Milford Road.

Old Tavern at Milford Road



Luther’s Tavern

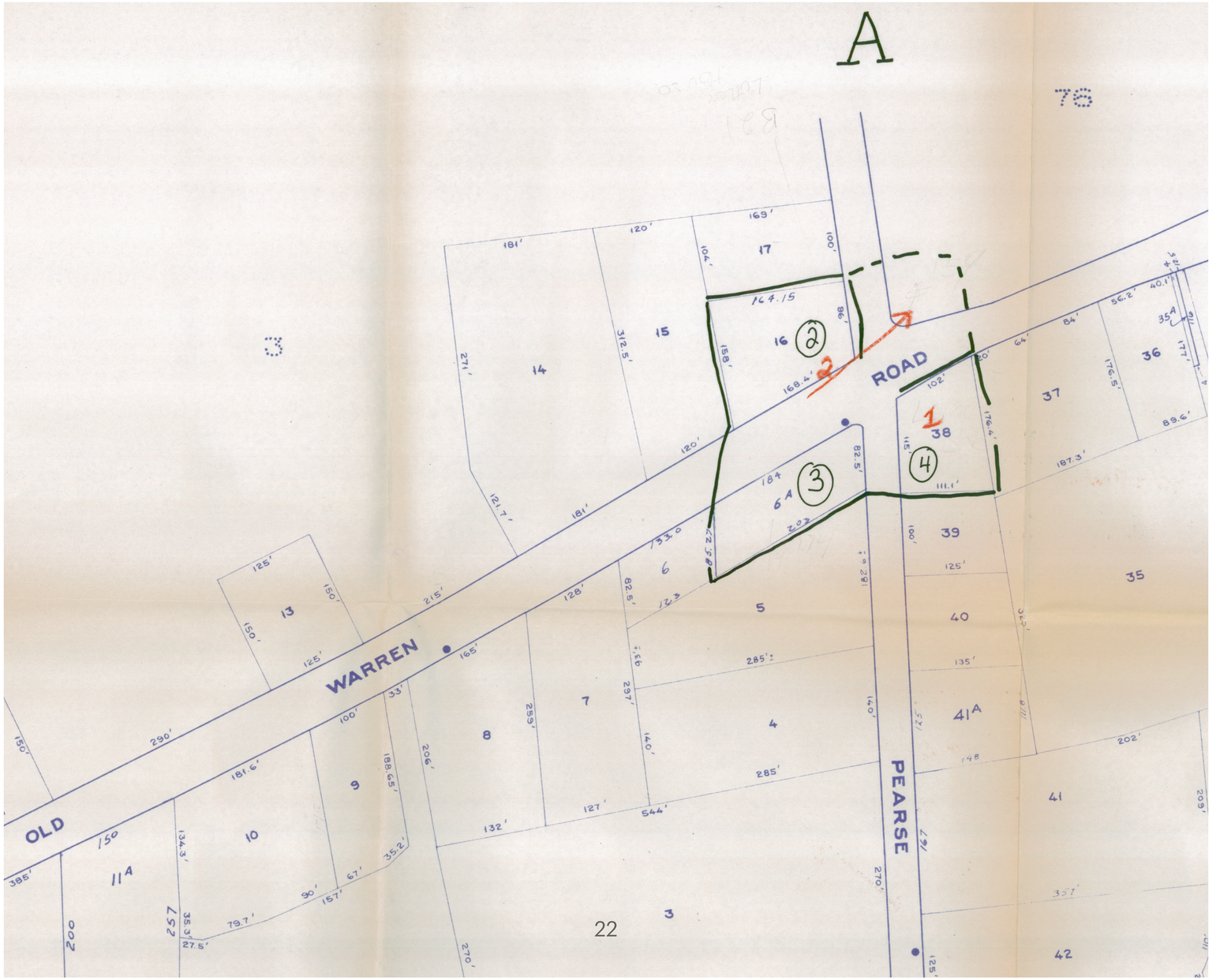
The third tavern is the James Luther Tavern at 159 Old Warren Road. It broke ground in 1799 and opened in 1803. It was a temperance house; James would not sell any alcohol at the tavern. Across the street was the Luther Store where James Luther’s family members added a very small bar area to sell alcohol to the tavern’s guests. It remained a tavern until the death of James Luther in 1857, when it was sold to James Easterbrook and his wife. The Easterbrooks raised trotter horses.

Luther’s Tavern at Luther’s Corner





Luther's Tavern at Luther's Corner



William P. Mason House/Graham's Tavern

The fourth tavern is the William P. Mason house, also known as Graham's Tavern, located at 5 Mason Street. Graham's Tavern was built on the outskirts of Barneyville, on the stagecoach route that connected Swansea to Providence. William P. Mason ran the tavern/hotel and store, built in 1830. In 1895, the post office location moved from Barneyville to 5 Mason Street.

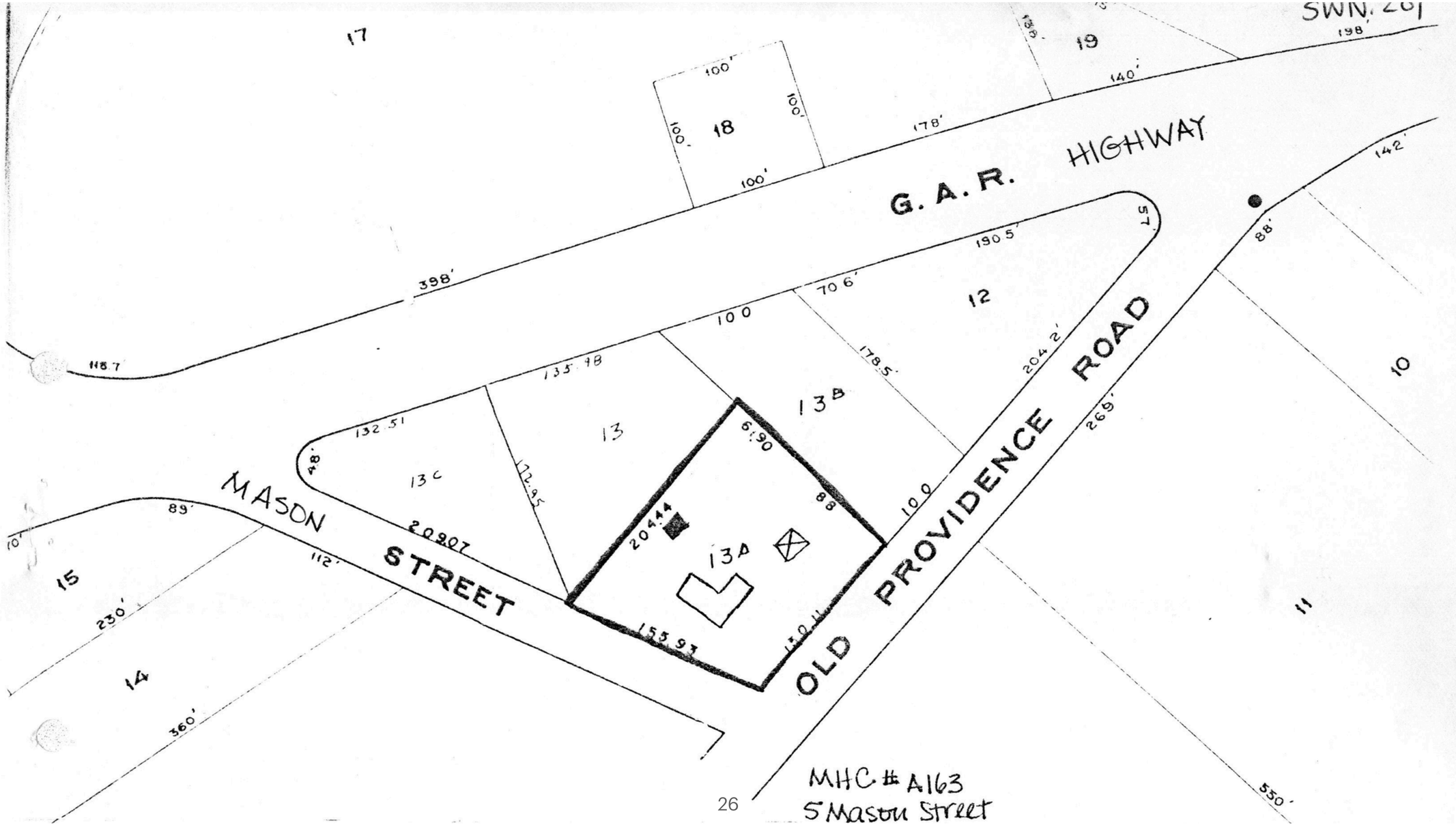
William P. Mason House/Graham's Tavern



William P. Mason House Today



William P. Mason House/Graham's Tavern



Pearse Farm Inn/Tavern

The fifth tavern is the Pearse Farm Inn/Tavern, located at 486 Pearse Road. This is the only tavern **not on the National Registry** because it did not meet the National Registry criteria. The property was built in 1810 by Alexander Gardner and sold to William Pearse.

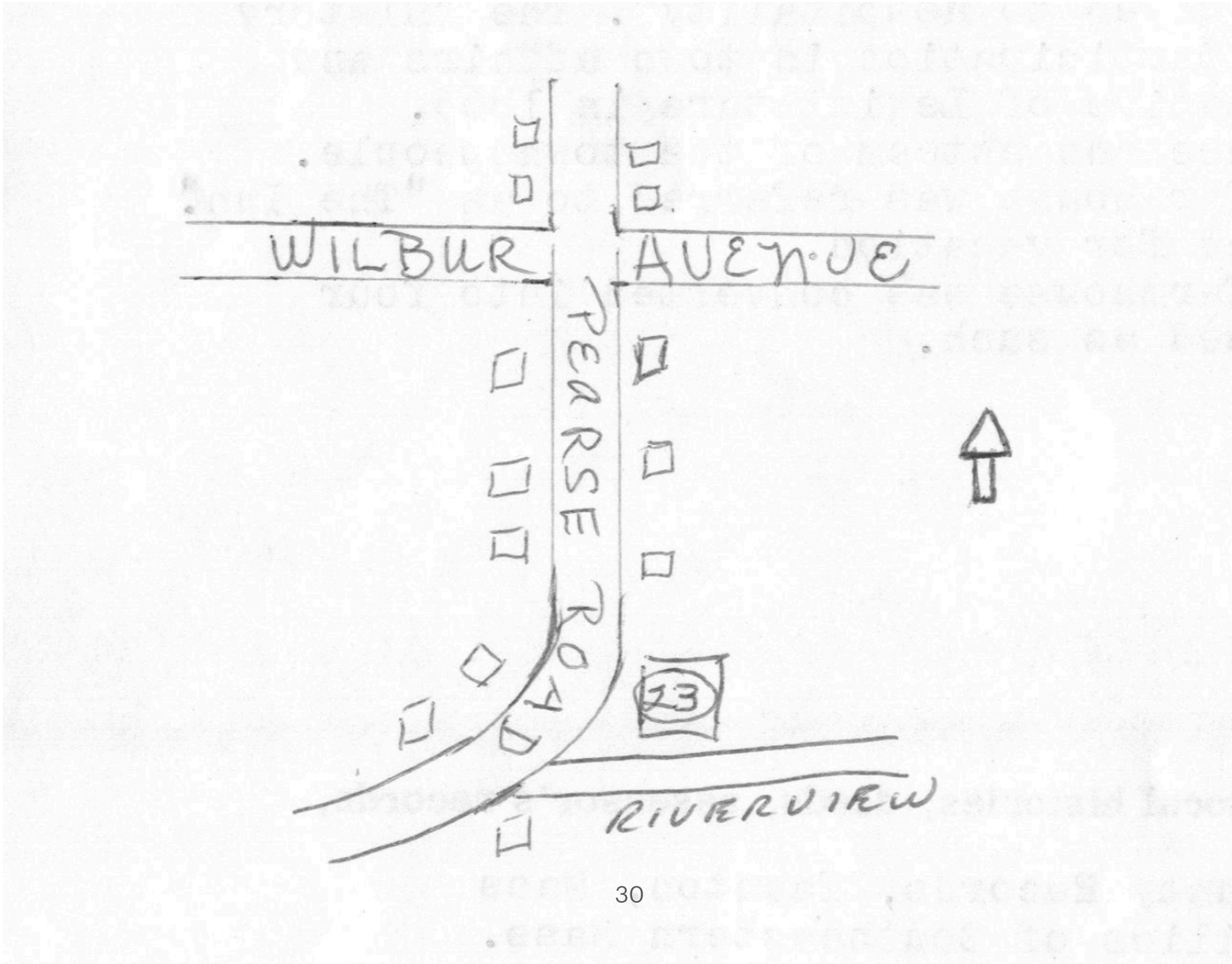
Pearse Farm Inn/Tavern



Pearse Farm Inn/Tavern Today



Pearse Farm Inn/Tavern



Hull House/Tavern

The sixth tavern is the Hull House, located at 93 Main Street. Word of mouth history dates the house back to 1730. The former owner lost the deeds to the house, but stated that the house dated back to 1730. Hull House was a tavern on the stagecoach route.

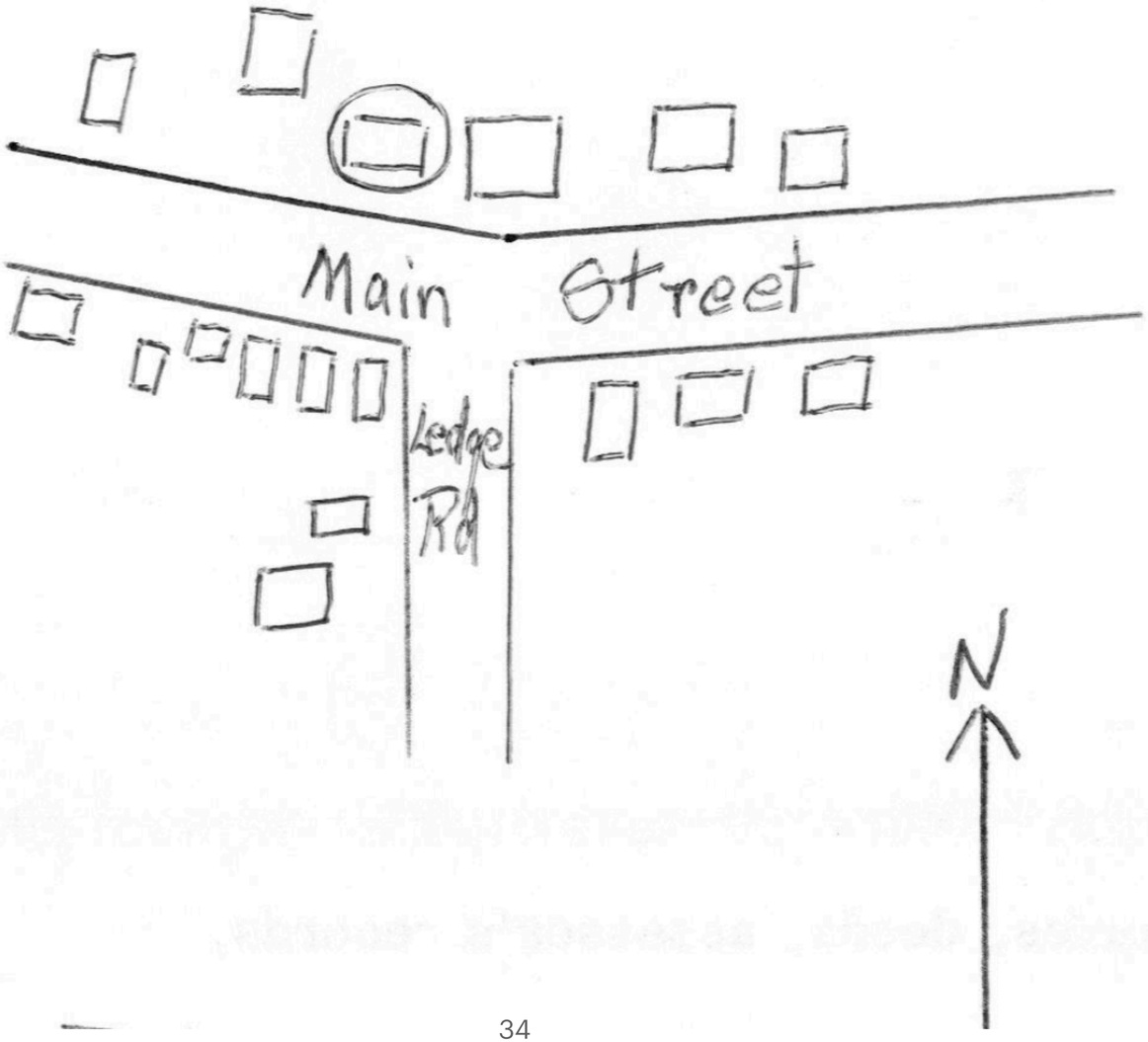
Hull House/Tavern



Hull House/Tavern Today



Hull House/Tavern



Buildings on the National Registry
Not in Historic Districts

There are 24 homes and buildings on the National Registry but not in Historic Districts. We just covered the taverns now we will go over homes and buildings that are found on the historic survey performed December 20, 1989.

Churches on the National Registry
<u>Not</u> in Historic Districts

First Baptist Church

21 Baptist Street

The First Baptist Church moved to Swansea from Barrington in 1717. It was rebuilt in 1848 and remains at its location today.



First Baptist Church Today



First Christian Congregational Church

1113 GAR Highway

The First Christian Congregational Church was originally built across the street from its current location on GAR Highway in 1720. The roof blew off in 1813 and was repaired. In 1833, a new church was built across the street and still stands today.



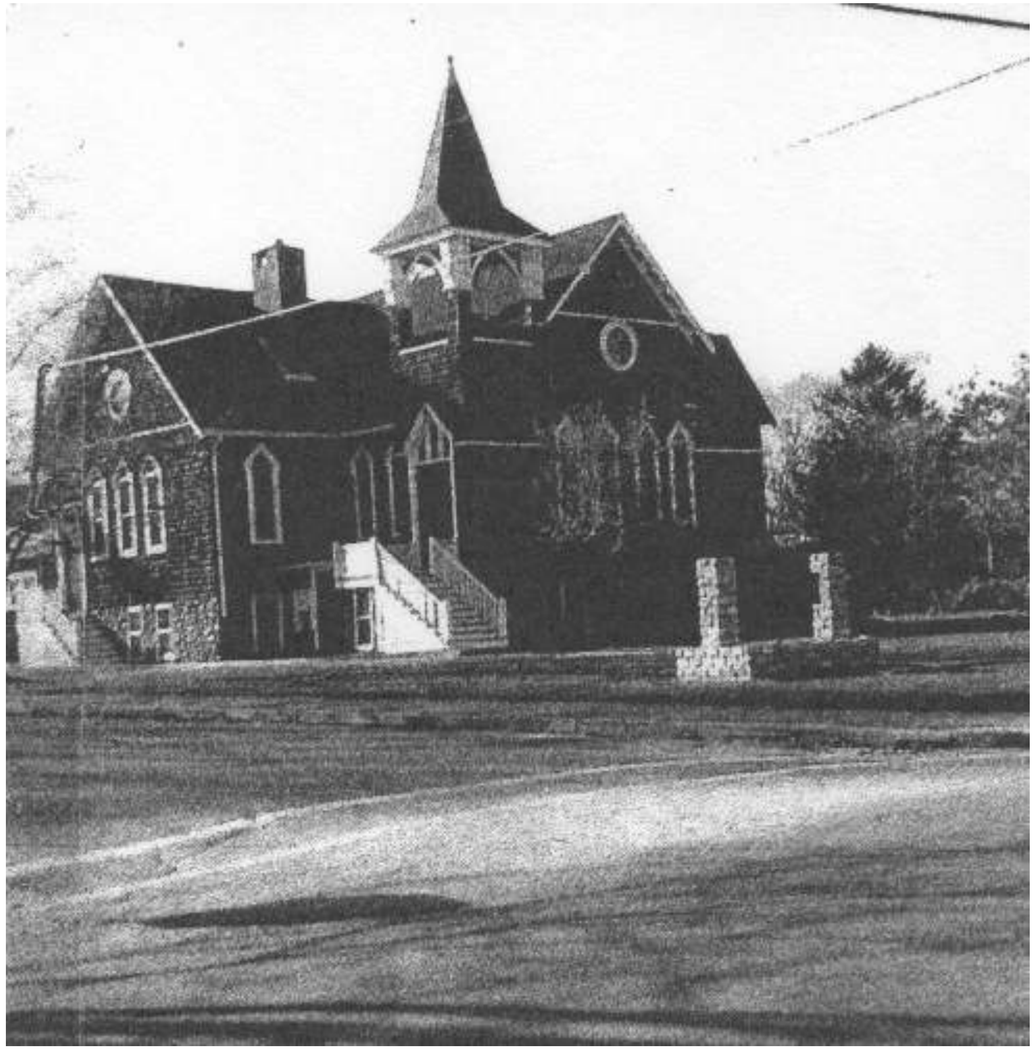
First Christian Congregational Church Today



Swansea Union Church

25 Church Street

The South Swansea Union Church is rooted from Sunday School classes that were started in 1910. These classes were held in private homes and grew rapidly. In 1916, the South Swansea Union Church opened its doors and remains at that location.



Swansea Union Church Today



Historic Homes Not in Historic Districts

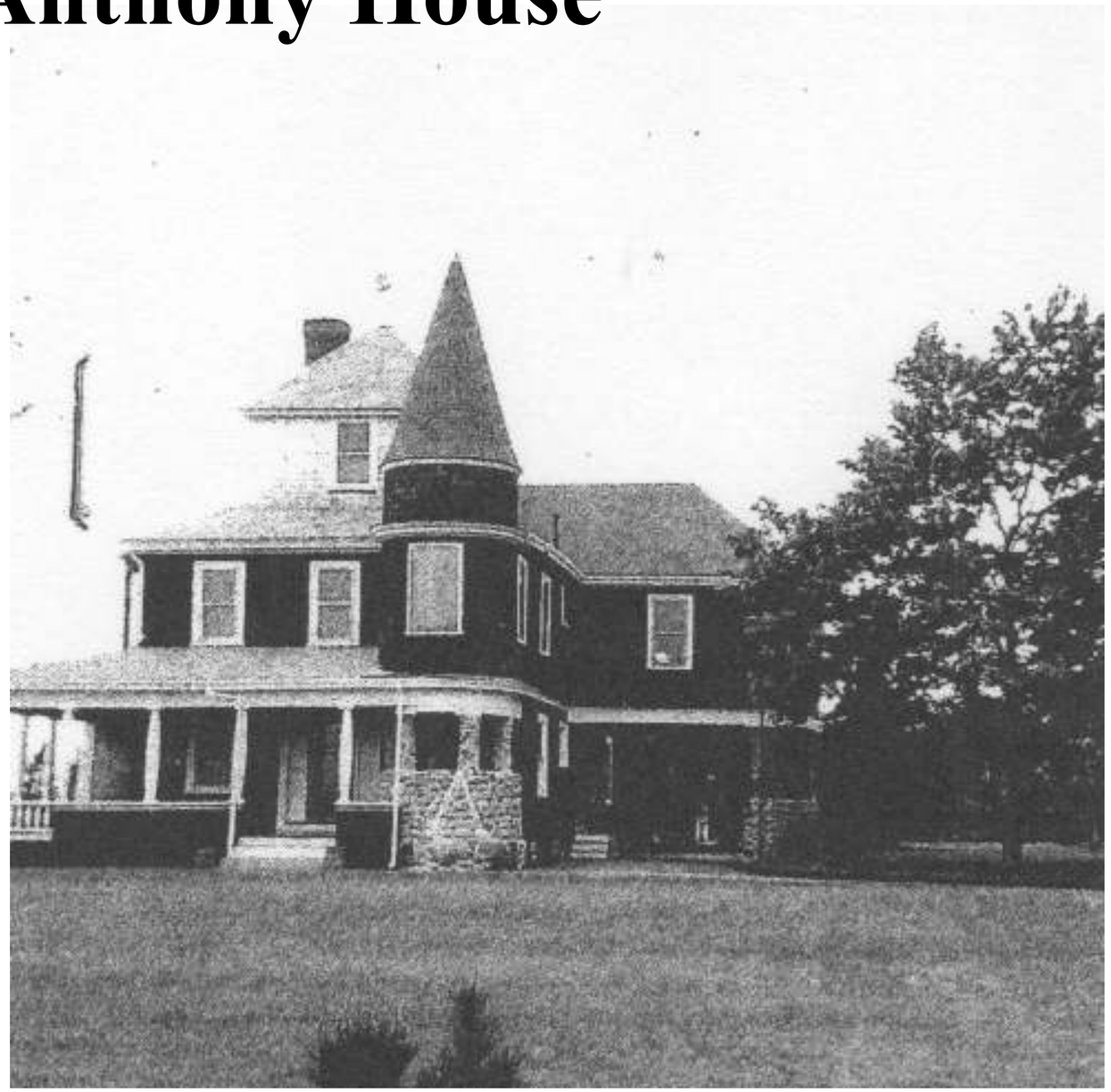
David M. Anthony House

98 Bay Point Road

Build date 1896

Original house no longer exists.

Exterior extremely altered.

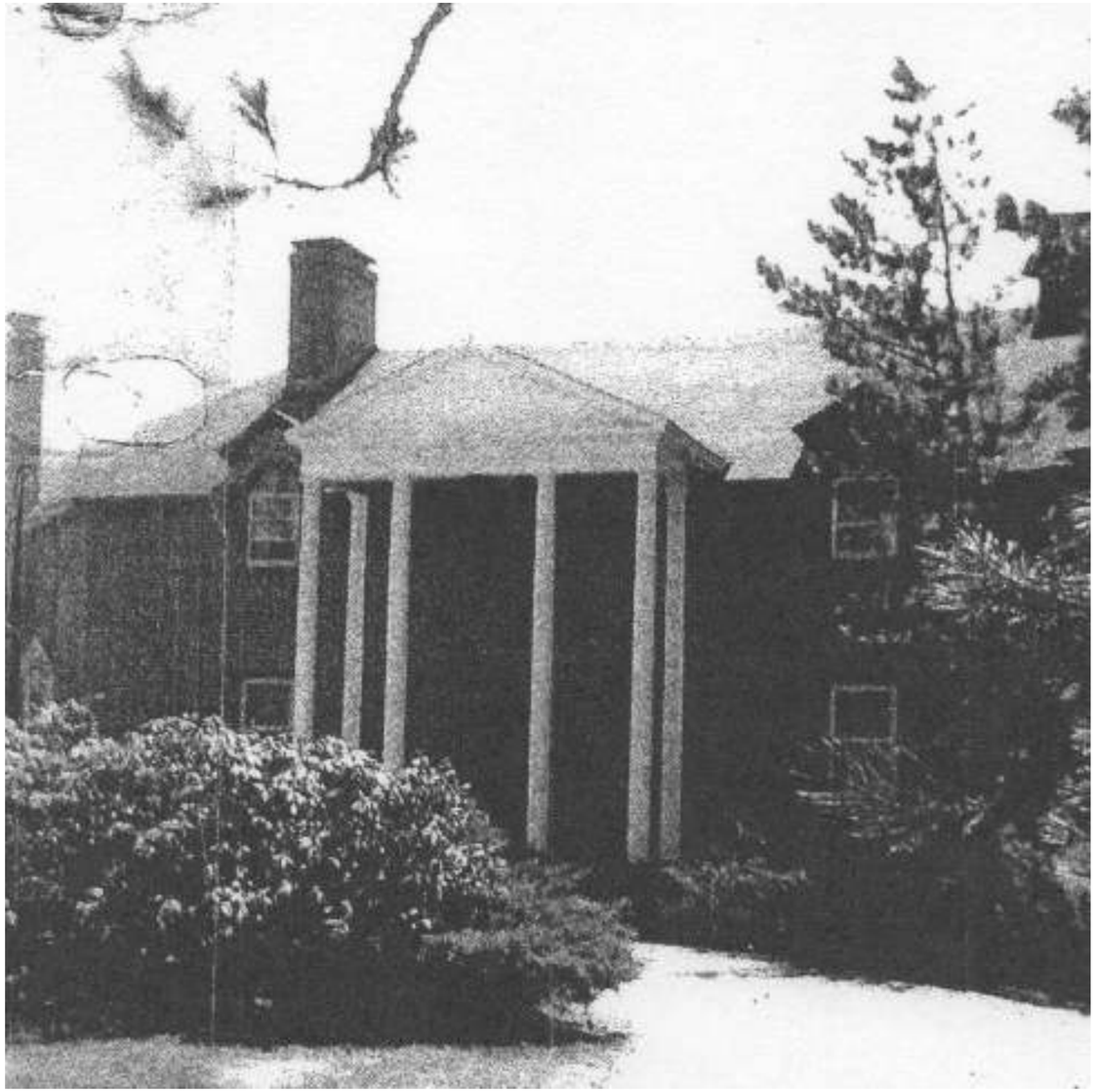


Harold Anthony House

132 Bay Point Road

Build date 1922

New owner has considerably altered the exterior of the home.



Bend of the Lane

181 Cedar Ave

Build date 1740

Built by Harlow Luther, dairy farmer.

Several Additions over the first 100 years.

Purchased in the 1920s by the Lane family, who operated a well-known dairy farm (Cedar Lane Dairy) into the early 1930s.



Bend of the Lane Today





Deacon John Buffington House

262 Cedar Ave

Build date 1790

Part of Cedar Lane Dairy (three houses were owned by the Lane family and part of Cedar Lane Dairy)



Deacon John Buffington House Today

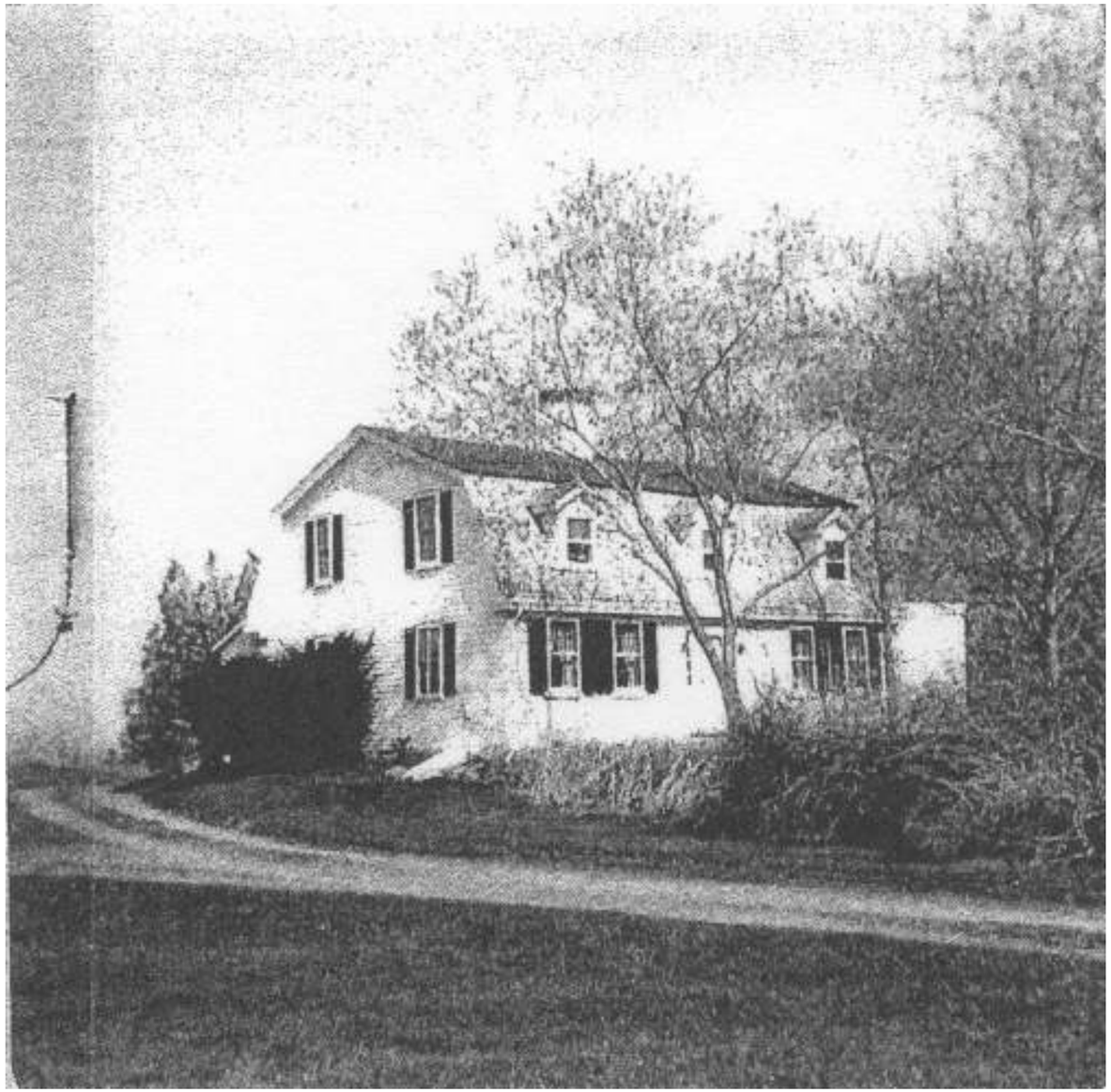


Samuel Gardner House

1035 Gardners Neck Rd.

Build date 1768

Garage and addition added to the house and address changed to Raymond Allard Road.

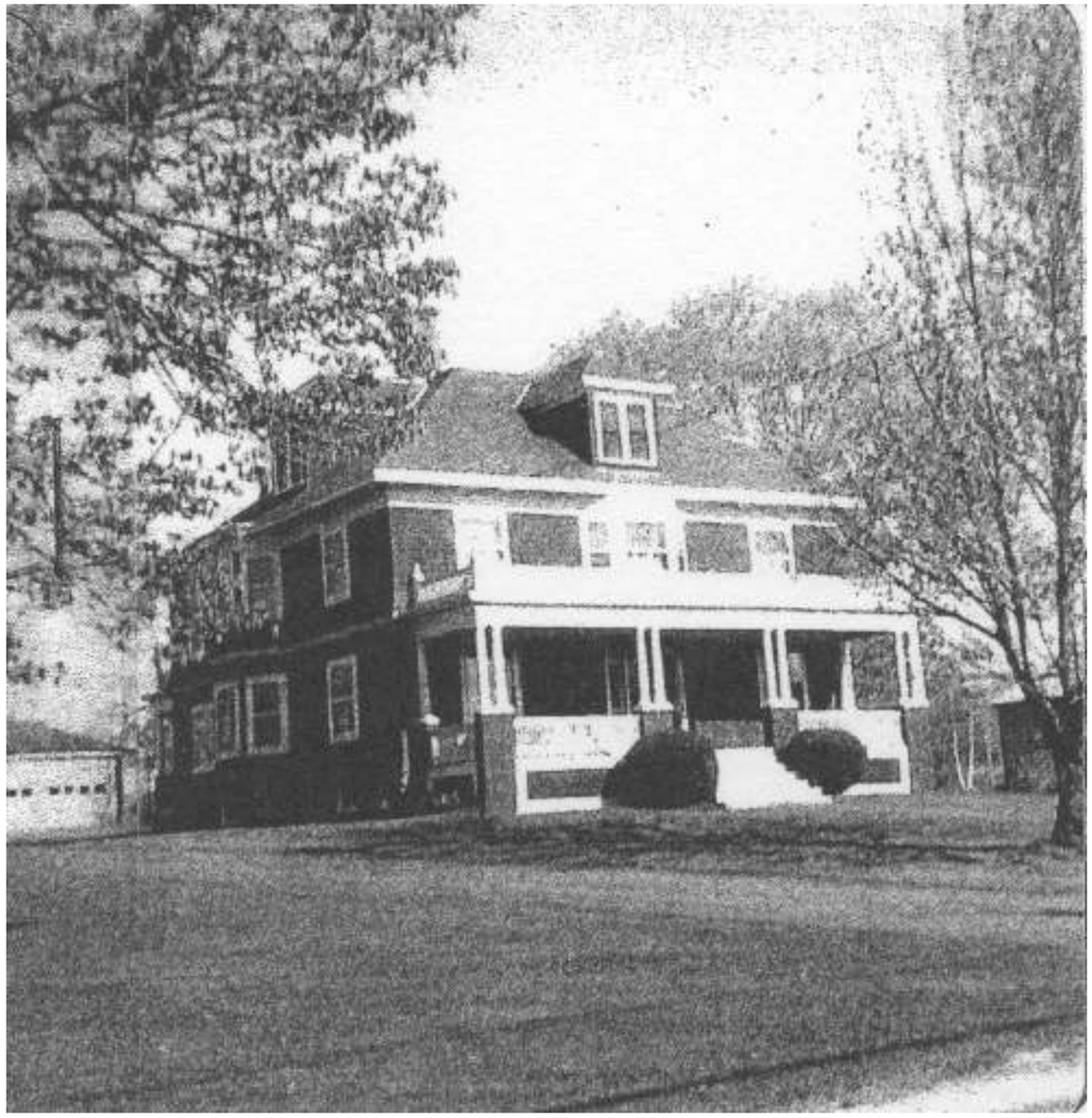


Francis Gardner House

1129 Gardners Neck Road

This was the location of the Leland Gardner Farm, the largest producer of celery in the US for many years.

This was the childhood house of Rachel Gardner.



Francis Gardner House Today



Joseph Gardner House

1205 Gardners Neck Road

Summer home of Lizzie Borden's family.



Joseph Gardner House Today



Hooper House

306 Hortonville Rd.

Build date 1790



Hooper House Today



Luther House

177 Market Street

Build date 1725



Luther House Today



Original Walkden Farm

495 Marvel Street

Build date 1800



Walkden Farm Today



Preserved Gardner House

90 Milford Road

Build date 1810



Preserved Gardner House

Demolished by the Town of Swansea October 21, 2024



Norton House

61 Old Providence Road

Original house built in the late 1600s, addition built in 1779.

This house was owned by Seymour Barney at the location of Algernon Barney's pig farm.



Norton House Today



Deacon Buffington House

79 Old Warren Road

Build date 1849

Demolished 1991



Benjamin Cole House

412 Old Warren Road

Build date 1710

One of the oldest houses
in town.



Benjamin Cole House Today



Smuggler’s House

361 Pearse Road

Build date 1800

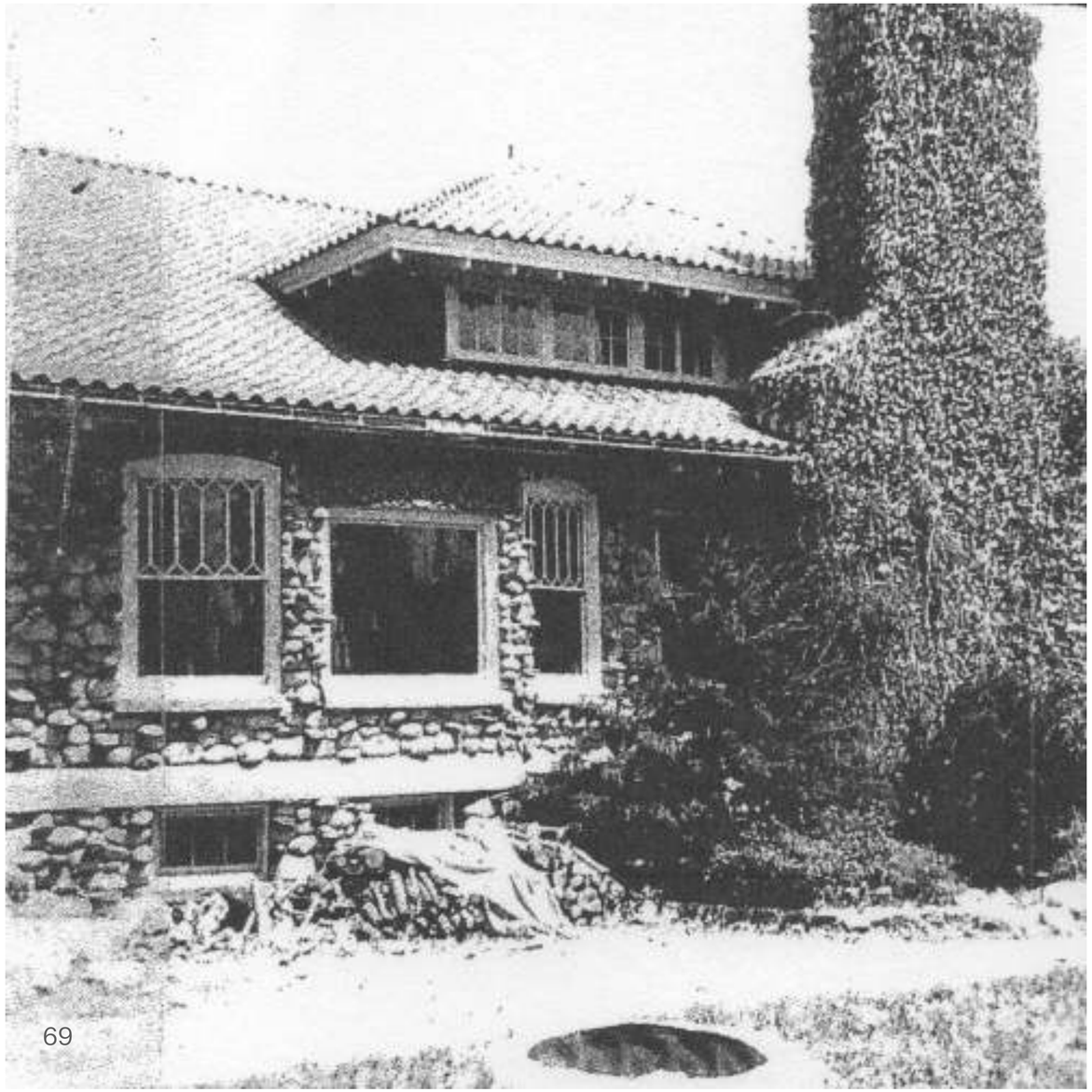


Johnson House

36 Riverview Ave.

Build date 1923

Only house in town made with fieldstone exterior.



Simcock House

1079 Sharp's Lot Road

Build date 1765



Simcock House Today



Bark Street School

68 Stevens Road

Build date 1905

Future home of the Swansea Town Hall



Bark Street School Today



Martin House

22 Stoney Hill Road

Build date 1728

Oldest working farm in Swansea.



Martin House Today



John Brown IV House

The last house to be covered is the John Brown IV House located at 703 Pearse Road.

Owners are Jay and Karen Bowen.



John Brown IV House

Build date 1752.

Deed research has shown that the property belonged to John Brown IV , (April 28 1675- April 23 1752), the son of John Brown III and Anne Mason Brown.

He was a member of the prominent Brown Family of Plymouth Colony and Rhode Island.

John Brown IV House

John Brown married Abigail Cole Brown on July 2, 1696.

It is not known if John Brown and his wife lived in this house or 793 Pearse Road (Riverby). They owned both properties. Riverby was purchased by Henry A. Gardner in 1874.

John Brown IV House
Timeline of Changes

1910

A picture of the original 1752 home taken in 1910 found in History of Swansea Massachusetts, 1667-1917.

One thing of note is that the house had shutters.



1930

The beautiful front porch was added between 1910 and 1930.



1953

Front porch has been removed and replaced with a front entrance. Side porch on the left side of the house. Bulkhead moved to opposite side of the house to make room for the side porch.



1954

Hurricane Carol caused moderate damage to the property. A large elm tree uprooted by Hurricane Carol came to rest against the house.



1955

Elm tree is gone.
Columns remain at the front entrance. Chimney is black with build date in white.
Building to left of house is Touisset Train Station.



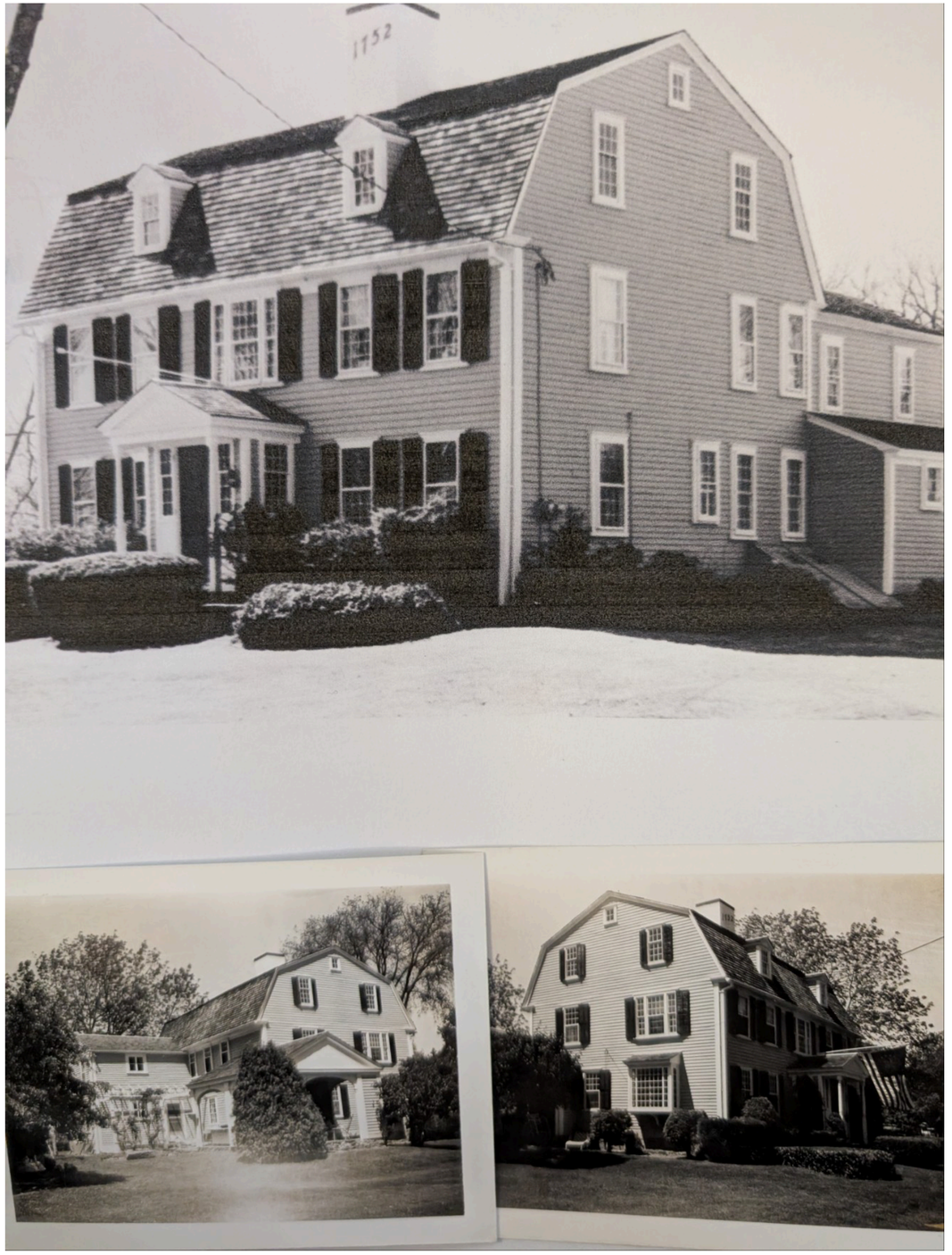
1960

Only change of note is the white chimney with black build date.



1978

Shutters are back on the house.



1978

Winter aerial view.



1979

Side porch enclosed.



1991

October – November
Minor renovations included windows changed out, house painted (color change) and columns at the front entrance removed. Mail basket used instead of mail box. Shown at the right side of the front door.



After renovations.
New roof, chimney repointed, copper properly placed on roof and gutters.



1991



Christmas, 2024





John Brown IV House Today





The End