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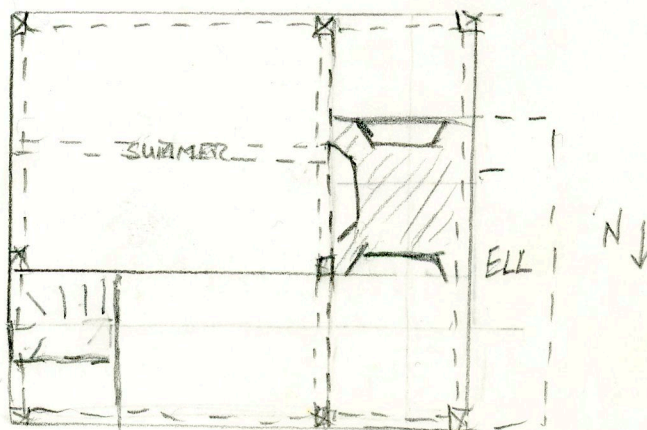
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ESTABROOK FARM HOUSE
Old Warren Road
Swansea, Mass.

Circa 1700-1725

The structure is a 2 storey half house; its dimensions are 28' x 24'. The floor plan contains 2 rooms on each floor plus a chimney bay containing an enclosed and chimney made of brick (average brick size is 8" x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ "). The chimney stack is original to the structure but the fireboxes have been reworked and/or removed and replaced. If there was an oven at any time, the location is not identifiable today.

The floor plan is of particular interest when studied in the context of other plan designs of the period and region. Generally throughout the 17th century the room corresponding to the room across the north side of the Estabrook House was built as an addition; the initial design of the Estabrook House was built incorporating this room as an integral part, as evidenced by the sill and the 3rd floor tie beams which run the full depth without a scarf joint. Structural investigation did not determine whether the one storey shed lean-to attached to the west gable end was original to the main structure or a very early addition.



The framing of the main house indicates very early construction. Many of its features are documented in 17th c. construction. The house is of plank construction and does not have any weather bracing. The posts are gun stock with double tenons, one to secure the tie girt and one to secure the plates. The plates and tie girts were constructed to sit on the posts with their tops flush.

The rafters are all principal and are bird-mouthed over the plate with a bridle joint at their apex. There are seven pairs of rafters spaced 3'10" on center with no purlins or collar ties.

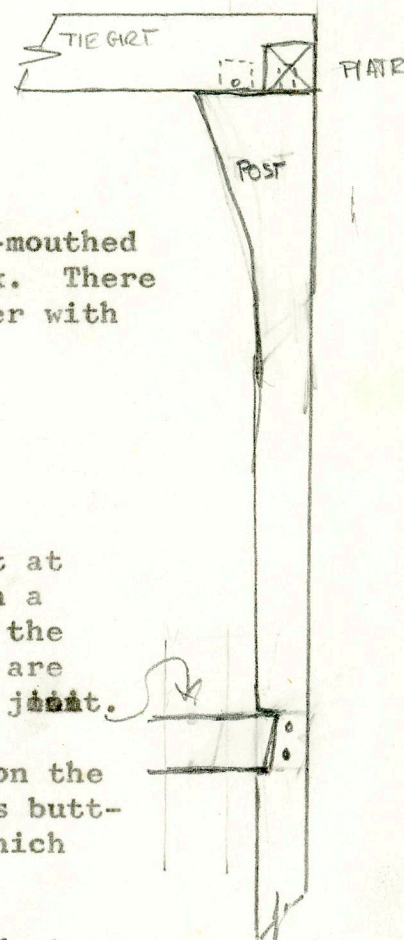
The first and second floor summer beams sit at right angles to the chimney girt and attach with a dovetail joint. It is interesting to note that the first floor chimney girt and east end girt only are joined to the posts by a housed soffit shoulder joint.

All timbers are hand-planed and chamfered on the interior edges. The joint of the floor joist is butt-~~edged~~ except the middle joint at the summer, which has a half dove tail.

The flooring is hand-planed on the underside to serve also as a ceiling. Sponge painting further enhances these ciling boards in the large back room.

Rough openings 1'8" x 3' for 3 windows were found under the plaster. One complete piece of quarry glass was found in the house which measured 5" x 5".

In conclusion the above described details suggest strongly that the Estabrook House was built during a transition period of the 17th - 18th century. The heavy medieval timbering and more complicated framing of the first generation of builders in this country



has given way to lighter construction methods, less complicated joinery, reflecting local conditions and influences.

It is strongly recommended that further documentation of this building and property through deeds, wills, etc. be performed. The structural evidence along with documented deed research would aid in determining a more definite construction date and would contribute substantially to the body of knowledge of architectural development in Rhode Island.

Anne W. Baker
Westport, Mass.
September 1, 1979

¹ Abbott Lowell Cummings, The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, Harvard University Press, 1979.