

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

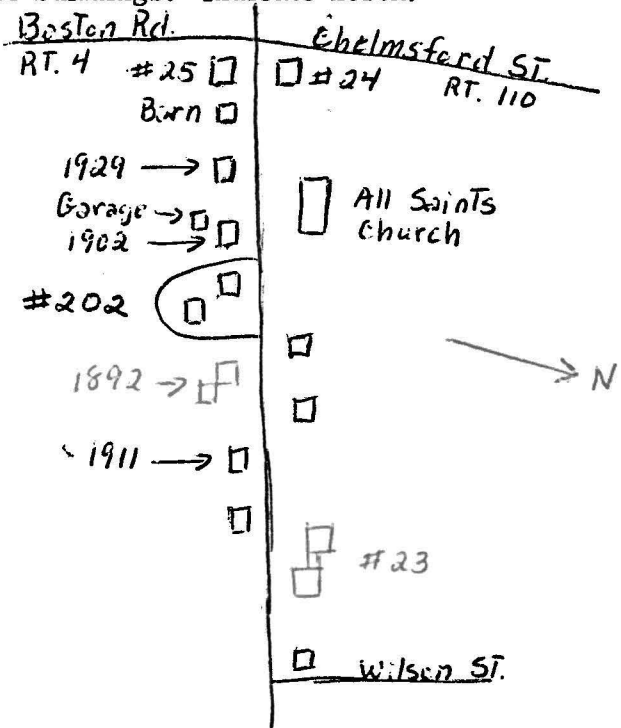
In Area no.	Form no.
	202

1. Town Chelmsford
 Address 19 Billerica Road
 Name Armstrong House
 Present use residence
 Present owner Fre derick Kilmartin

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
 Staple to left side of form
 Photo number _____

3. Description:
 Date 1900 1894-5
 Source deeds, tax records
 Style _____
 Architect _____

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Exterior wall fabric vinyl siding
rear right
 Outbuildings (describe) barn & 2 car gar.
 Other features _____

 Altered _____ Date _____
 Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:
 One acre or less _____ Over one acre 2.22
 Approximate frontage 94 feet
 Approximate distance of building from street
34.7 feet

6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury
 Organization Chelmsford Hist. Commission
 Date November 4, 1976

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
 USGS Quadrant _____
 MHC Photo no. _____

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Benjamin M. Fiske

Original use residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion
Architectural	_____	Exploration/	_____	Science/
The Arts	_____	settlement	_____	invention
Commerce	_____	Industry	<u>x</u>	Social/
Communication	_____	Military	_____	humanitarian
Community development	<u>x</u>	Political	_____	Transportation

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

After the death of Benjamin M. Fiske on May 9, 1901, his heirs (John M. Fiske of East Orange, N.J.; Joseph W. Fiske of Passaic, N.J.; Frederick A.P. Fiske of Somerville, Mass.; Elizabeth F. Warren of Chelmsford; and his widow Elizabeth A. Fiske) sold a portion of the homestead land (#25) on Billerica Rd. for house lots. One of these was at 19 Billerica Rd., where the house was built just before the death of Benjamin M. Fiske.

It was purchased by Mary H. Armstrong, wife of C. George Armstrong, on Dec. 2, 1901, and the Armstrongs were without doubt the first to occupy the building. Mr. Armstrong was the co-founder and president of the Chelmsford Spring Co., which later became the Chelmsford Ginger Ale Co. (#209), and still later was sold to the Canada Dry Ginger Ale Co. (see attached sheet for further information on his life).

C. George Armstrong was also active in the establishment of the Chelmsford Water District. The Chelmsford Spring Co. building was completely demolished by fire in 1912, and this event emphasized the need for improved fire protection. Mr. Armstrong became a member of a committee to further investigate the situation. The Water District was established in 1913, and Mr. Armstrong was one of its commissioners. The Chelmsford Water District is still in existence in 1976 and served the Center part of town; others are in the east, north, and south sections of Chelmsford, and each is completely independent from the Town of Chelmsford.

In 1940, four years after his death, Mr. Armstrong's daughters sold the house.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

1889 Atlas
Chelmsford Tax Valuation Lists 1901-2
Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds
Bk. 339, pg. 421 Fiske to Armstrong 1901
Bk. 952, pg. 503 Armstrong et al to MacElroy 1940
Chelmsford Directory, 1915-16-17-21-22
Mortgage Survey Plan (Unrecorded) July 20, 1963
Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955
Lowell Courier-Citizen 5/11/1911; 8/8/1911; 7/23/1913

19 Billerica Road

Book 1867, pg. 215	11/18/1968	James J. Barrett to Frederick J. & Eleanor D. Kilmartin 2.22 acres & dwelling house, barn & garage thereon
Book 1609, pg. 542	7/ 2/1963	Rudolph M. Andolshek, Trustee, to James J. Barrett, Fairhaven \$21,000 2.22 acres & dwelling house, barn & garage To confirm title
Book 1609, pg. 541	7/ 2/1963	Joan A. Werner, Beacon, N.Y. & Lois A. Moore, Center Moriches, N.Y., to James J. Barrett, Fairhaven 2.22 acres & dwelling house, barn & garage Devises of Daniel E. Haley, d. Oct. 29, 1956
Book 1020, pg. 493	4/ 2/1945	Grant R. MacElroy to Daniel E. & Augusta A. Haley 2.22 acres & buildings thereon
Book 952, pg. 503	8/30/1940	Marjorie A. Cubberley, Wellesley, & Beatrice H. Armstrong, to Grant R. MacElroy 2.22 acres 2/9 interest
Book 952, pg. 504	9/27/1940	Guardians of Winifred P. Armstrong to Grant R. MacElroy \$577.78 2/9 interest
Book 952, pg. 507	8/27/1940	Trustees under Will of C. George Armstrong to Grant R. MacElroy 3/9 interest
Book 339, pg. 421	12/ 2/1901	Heirs of Benjamin M. Fiske to Mary H. Armstrong land & buildings thereon

Chelmsford Ginger Ale Co.

Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955

The Chelmsford Ginger Ale Co., Inc. was established in 1901 by its president (Christopher) George Armstrong, born in St. Mary's, Ontario, 1864. He served in the Canadian forces during the Riel rebellion (1885) in the Canadian west and later went to Australia for a year to rebuild his health. He returned to Canada by way of the Suez Canal, thus completing a circling of the globe.

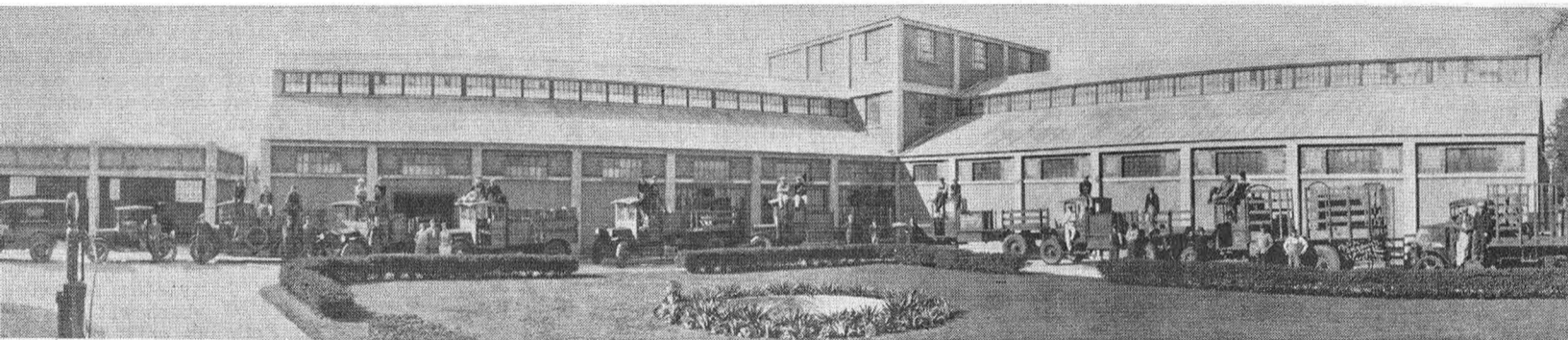
Meanwhile his sister, S. Jennie Armstrong, had married Mr. John Byfield of the Byfield Manufacturing Company in Chelmsford and Mr. Armstrong became a salesman for its products. After his subsequent marriage to Miss Mary Hendricks Hallett of Sussex, New Brunswick, grand-daughter of the Rev. John Parkhurst (Inventory #104) of Chelmsford, Mr. Armstrong opened a millinery store in Godericj, Ont. After the store was burned, he went to Sussex again and there formed a ginger ale company with his brother-in-law, S. H. White. The Sussex Ginger Ale Company is still in existence and does a large business throughout the maritime provinces.

Mr. Armstrong wished to return to New England, however, and became interested in the possibility of organizing a ginger ale company in Chelmsford where he found an abundance of pure spring water available from Robin's Hill and a building ready for his use in the old Byfield plant which was then empty (Note by J. Drury: this building burned in 1893 and had to be rebuilt by Armstrong in 1901.). At first the Chelmsford Spring Company was connected with the Sussex company, but it soon became independent. It made ginger ale, and ginger beer which was sold in stone bottles imported from England. This latter product had to be given up eventually, for the opaque stone bottles became illegal and the ginger beer's keeping qualities were impaired by being bottled in any other container then available.

In 1912, the original Chelmsford ginger ale plant was destroyed by fire, but it was immediately rebuilt. Other plants were later established in Boston and in Shrewsbury, and the local plant enlarged. In 1928 the business was sold to Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Inc. (Note by J. Drury: deeds give this date as 9/30/1931), which still operates it and which still includes Chelmsford ginger ale as one of its products.

Mr. Armstrong continued to take part in the business as a director of the Canada Dry company until his death in 1936. During the last years of his life, Mr. Armstrong broadened his interests to include ownership of a large farm, Armont, in West Campton, N.H. There he found relaxation and the great satisfaction in his fine herds of cattle and Angora goats, the beautiful woodlands with their sugar maple trees, the vegetable garden and splendid orchard. He constructed by the road-side a stoppingplace for motorists where they might see what has been called the finest view to be found of the foothills of the White Mountains. His daughter, Miss Beatrice Armstrong, is now the resident owner of this property.

Mrs. Armstrong died in Chelmsford in 1936; and very shortly after, Mr. Armstrong was stricken by a heart seizure. Mr. & Mrs. Armstrong had three children, all of whom are now living: Mrs. H. C. Cubberley of San Diego, California; and the Misses Winifred and Beatrice Armstrong of West Campton.



1923: Chelmsford Ginger Ale plant, personnel, and vehicles used in distributing the beverage.

19 Billerica Street

Lowell Weekly Journal:

July 20, 1894 - B.M. Fiske has broken ground for a new house on Billerica street adjoining the premises of E.A. Stevens. Charles E. Parkhurst has the contract and R.W. Dix puts in the foundation.

March 26, 1895 - Carpenters are completing B.M. Fiske's new house on Billerica street. It is reported that two others will be built this season.

June 7, 1895 - The fine new dwelling just completed by B.M. Fiske is offered for sale. E.K. Parkhurst will tell you about it.

July 5, 1901 - J. Arthur Spare and family have moved into the Fiske house in Billerica street.

Nov. 22, 1901 - Mr. C.G. Armstrong of the bottling company has bought the Fiske house in Billerica street, now occupied by J. Arthur Spare and family. Mr. Armstrong will take possession in a few weeks and Mr. Spare will remove to the tenement in Wilson's block recently vacated by Dr. E.H. Chamberlin.

Dec. 20, 1901 - Mr. Armstrong & family are in their new home in Billerica street.

Lowell Courier - Citizen

May 11, 1911 - The death of Mrs. Sarah Parkhurst Hallett occurred this evening at the home of C. George Armstrong in Billerica street. She was in her 87th year. She was the daughter of the Rev. John Parkhurst, first pastor of the Baptist society in Chelmsford and was born in 1825 at the old Parkhurst homestead in South Chelmsford. After her marriage to John Allen Hallett they made their home in Chelmsford until 1874, when they moved to Sussex, N.B. The death of her husband occurred there in 1894, and in 1901 she returned to Chelmsford, where she has since made her home with her daughter, Mrs. C. George Armstrong. She is survived by a son, Edgar P. Hallett of Boston, and two daughters, Mrs. J. Waldo Perham and Mrs. C. George Armstrong of Chelmsford; also three sisters, Mrs. E. A. Fiske of Chelmsford; Mrs. Dexter Battles of South Chelmsford; Mrs. Susan Bucknam of Greenwood; and two brothers, John Parkhurst of Boston and Charles W. Parkhurst of Melrose.

Lowell Courier-Citizen:

May 19, 1911 - C. George Armstrong, proprietor of the Chelmsford Spring Co., met with a painful accident Thursday afternoon. While assisting in handling a barrel of sugar, the third finger of his right hand was caught in a chain hoist and the end of the finger crushed off. The injured member was dressed by Dr. Scoboria.

Aug. 1, 1911 - Mrs. C. George Armstrong of Billerica street, with her children start on Thursday for her former home at Sussex, N.B., where they will remain for the month of August.

Aug. 8, 1911 - C. George Armstrong, proprietor of the Chelmsford Spring Co., left today to join his family at Sussex, N.B.

Jan. 8, 1912 - C. George Armstrong left tonight for Montreal and will also go to Quebec and Ottawa later, visiting the Sussex Mineral Co., limited. at Sussex, N.B.

July 23, 1913 - Some Modern Industries

The Chelmsford Spring Co., is another industry that has had a remarkable growth. It was burned out a few months ago, but saved enough of its operating plant to resume operations within a few days, and it will enter its new building in the middle of August. There will be no fire in the new bottling works, for the building, which rises to three stories in its highest point, is constructed of steel, cement, asbestos, and glass. There will not be a stick of wood in it.

Mr. Armstrong (C. G.) had lived and worked in Chelmsford in the days of the Beaver Knitting mill. Then he went elsewhere, and in the course of the years, became interested in the Sussex Mineral Spring Co. of New Brunswick. He returned to Chelmsford one day literally to carbonate and bottle the famous spring that gushes from the side of Robin Hill. At first his plant was a branch of the Sussex Co., but ere long Chelmsford ginger ale was standing on its own merits. It had created a demand of its own, and was established as a distinct industry. Today the company bottles a variety of Chelmsford spring temperance drinks, and ships them far and wide, even beyond the limits of this country. There is no limit to which it may grow in the future; and all because of the reputation of a pure Chelmsford spring.



C. G. Armstrong



7/25/2004 F. Merriam