

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

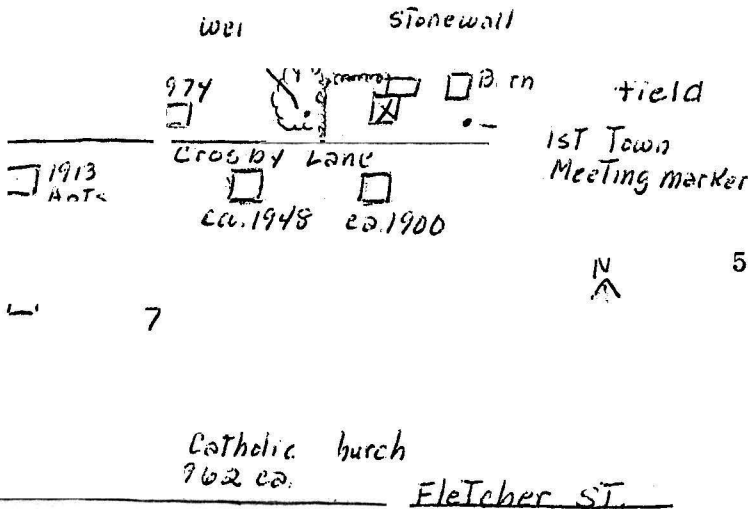
In Area No.

40

- 2 Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form
Photo number 7-10A

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

RT 495



1. Town Chelmsford
Address 14 Crosby Lane
Name Capt. Josiah Fletcher house
Present use residence

Present owner Ronald D. Greenwood

3. Description
Date ca 1802
Source see attached sheet
Style Georgian
Architect _____
Exterior wall fabric lapped clapboard
Outbuildings (describe) see attached sheet
features 8 working fireplaces,
pegged & mortised construction, wide
board floors, excellent condition
Altered yes see attached sheets Date _____
Moved no Date _____

- 5 Lot size
One acre or less _____ Over one acre 2.53
Approximate frontage 340 feet
Approximate distance of building from street
30 feet

6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury
Organization Chelmsford Hist. Commission
Date November 18, 1974

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

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Captain Josiah Fletcher, 3rd (B. 1759, D. 1859)

Original use residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

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

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

See attached sheet

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

1875 Beers Atlas

1856 Walling's Map

1831 Map

Waters, "History of Chelmsford"

"Chelmsford Vital Statistics to 1850"

Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, Diary 1749-1792

Edward H. Fletcher, "Fletcher Genealogy"

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds:

Book 17, pg. 327; Book 6, pg. 284

Middlesex Probate Dockets #31903, #7882

14 Crosby Lane

Date: about 1802

According to Josiah R. Fletcher (Waters, p. 394); the house was built by his grandfather, Captain Josiah Fletcher, 3rd,....."and his oldest brother, William, who had lived with him in the old house (just west of 14 Crosby Lane), bought the Bates House, which he occupied until his death." (Deeds Book 9, pg. 80: Abner Herrick to William Fletcher, 3/10/1803). Chelmsford Vital Statistics show that Josiah, 3rd, was born March 20, 1759; married October 16, 1781 Mercy Richardson, and died February 20, 1850. His father, Josiah, Jr., deeded the land and old house to him in 1781 (Deeds Book 6, pg. 284). After his father's death in 1802, Josiah 3rd probably built the new house.

A diary written by Rev. Ebenezer Bridge between 1749 & 1792 mentions several house & barn raisings in town and also many visits made by the minister to Josiah Sr. & Jr., who probably lived together, but no mention is made of a house raising by them, indicating that the house was built after 1792 (However, there are some parts of the diary missing, though 1781 is complete, and the Rev. Bridge became very sickly and no house raisings at all were mentioned in the latter part of the diary.)

Outbuildings: barn, well house

Barn:

The original Josiah Fletcher barn according to Bridge's Diary was blown down in a tornado-like storm about 5 PM on June 18, 1782.

When the Fletcher heirs sold to Laommi Chamberlain in 1852, they reserved the right that "the old barn may remain where it is one year and that said John may use the same and shall remove the same at any time within one year from date." This suggests that the present barn was built by Chamberlain soon after. It is a separate building from the house, in excellent shape with old large beams and pegged floors.

Well:

The well left (west) of the house is no longer used but still contains water and was used by several generations of Fletchers. The "house" over it is of solid pegged construction. The floor of the "house" is a large granite slab covering the well, with a round hole carved out of the center, through which the bucket was pulled.

Historical Significance:

This house was built on a portion of the land settled by William Fletcher (b. 1622 in England; died 1677 in Chelmsford), one of the original settlers of Chelmsford, and in whose house the first town meeting was held.

The old Josiah Fletcher house stood 25 feet west of 14 Crosby Lane and used a well which is in the garden west of the present house. Although Josiah, Jr. deeded his home to his son Josiah in 1781, the two Josiahs and son/brother William (b. 1754, d. 1845) apparently continued to live there until 1802, when the elder Josiah died, and 14 Crosby Lane was built and occupied by the younger Josiah until his death in 1850. The old house was probably torn down about 1822.

Captain Josiah Fletcher, 3rd, marched to Concord on April 19, 1775

Historical Significance (cont.):

as a private, and fought on and off throughout the war and during Shay's Rebellion, eventually rising to the rank of Captain. He stood about 5 feet 6-8 inches tall, was of light complexion, was a member of a committee in 1803 to "prop and secure the meetinghouse" in preparation for the ordination of Rev. Allen, was a member of the board of trustees for the Chelmsford Classical School, and farmed the old Fletcher land until his death in 1850. In 1852 (shortly after the death of his widow Zilpah, who was willed the use of $\frac{1}{2}$ the dwelling) his sons and heirs sold the home to Laommi Chamberlain.

Laommi Chamberlain, a contractor, came from Townsend, Mass: but was living at 14 Crosby Lane in 1859, when he, as the lowest bidder, was awarded the contract to build the Revolutionary Monument, which now stands on the Common in the center of Chelmsford. Just prior to this time, he served two years as a selectman.

In 1870 Chamberlain sold the house and 5 acres of land to Ephraim Crosby, who came from Lowell to live in the house. The Crosbys remained there for 39 years. The house is sometimes called the Crosby house, and the road in front of the house was given their name, Crosby Lane. Though it now ends at the house, Crosby Lane is part of one of the oldest roads in town, which began at the meeting-house, and followed Westford Street to Worthen Street to Crosby Lane. It crossed the field which is right (east) of the house, curved behind the present Alpine Bowling Alleys, came out on Stedman Street, and ended at Middlesex Village (now part of Lowell, by the Merrimack River).

14 Crosby Lane
Middlesex Registry of Deeds

North: Book 1911, Page 701
January 22, 1970

Raymond H. & Kathryn J. Greenwood to
Ronald D. & Anne Marie Greenwood
2.9 acres, buildings thereon
\$1
Life estate of Bertha K. Simpson terminated
by death January 2, 1970

North: Book 1688, Page 95
March 11, 1965

Bertha K. Simpson to
Raymond H. & Kathryn J. Greenwood
2.9 acres, buildings thereon
\$15,000 mortgage
Reserving life estate for Bertha K. Simpson

North: Book 562, Page 51
September 26, 1916

Estate of Abby F. Crosby to
Bertha K. Simpson
5 acres, buildings thereon
\$4500

North: Book 122, Page 278
February 9, 1877

Ephraim Crosby to his daughter,
Abby F. Crosby
5 acres, buildings thereon
\$3000

North: Book 73, Page 461
April 25, 1870

Laommi Chamberlain to
Ephraim Crosby, Lowell
5 acres, dwelling house
\$2200
Subject to cart path for use by William Fletcher
& heirs.

North: Book 19, Page 65; South: Book 632, Page 209
May 6, 1852

John Fletcher, Amherst, N.H. to
Laommi Chamberlain, Townsend
28 acres & 132 sq. rods (5 parcels with
buildings)
\$2000
Excepting: old barn, to be removed by Fletcher
within one year.

North: Book 17, Page 327; South: Book 586, Page 56
April 27, 1850

Josiah & Gardner Fletcher, Gentlemen, to
Lovell Fletcher, Gentleman
14 acres & 59 rods, house lot & garden
\$2000 (house lot & 3 other lots)
Reserving:
1. old barn to Josiah Fletcher
2. $\frac{1}{2}$ dwelling to Zilpah Fletcher, widow

Middlesex Probate Docket #31903
1850

Will: Josiah Fletcher, gentleman, to sons
Josiah, Jr., Gardner, Lovel
All his estate, real & Personal
Restriction: use of $\frac{1}{2}$ of real estate by
his widow, Zilpah.

North: Book 6, Page 284; South: Book 82, Page 471
December 1, 1781

Josiah Fletcher, yeoman, to son
Josiah Fletcher, 3rd, husbandman
 $\frac{2}{3}$ of east end of dwelling house in which he
dwells; milk-room, cellar, malt house.

Middlesex Probate Docket #7882
1760

Will: Josiah Fletcher to his 3 sons
Josiah, Andrew, Henry
Restriction: life use of all real estate
by his widow, Joanna.
Dwelling, malt house, barn

Waters, "History of Chelmsford:

Pg. 394

The one-story gambrel-roofed building (which stood on the west of North Square until recently demolished) commonly known as the Captain Bill Fletcher house, was not originally a Fletcher residence. As recently as 1840 it was known as the Bates house, and was at one time occupied by a man named Herrick. Abner Herrick was for many years sexton of the meeting house. He died in 1806, aged 55. Josiah R. Fletcher gave the writer these facts: The first home in Chelmsford owned and occupied by the Fletchers stood about fifty or sixty rods east of the Bates house in what is now a field for cultivation and on the left (north) of a cart path (a continuation of Crosby Lane) leading eastward from the Crosby house. See top of Plan No. 7. This was the house where the first public meeting in town was held.

That field was held in possession by lineal descendants of the original owner until within the last ten years. The cellar was not filled in until I was twenty-five years old (1847) and my father often called my attention to it when a boy, as we passed it on our way to work. The house in which my father was born stood twenty-five feet west of the Crosby house, and the well which supplies water for the same is the one from which several generations of Fletchers drank. This Fletcher house, although it had become too weather beaten for a dwelling, was standing until after my birth, and I was told by my mother that she carried me in her arms through it, in order that I might be able to say in after years that I was once in the house in which my father was born. My grandfather, Captain Josiah Fletcher, built the house now known as the Crosby house, and occupied it during the remainder of his life, and his oldest brother, William, who had lived with him in the old house, bought the Bates house, which he occupied until his death. ~~William Fletcher never held~~ Thus it was called the Capt. Wm. Fletcher house. William Fletcher never held the rank of Captain, although he was a soldier at Bunker Hill. Another brother, who performed service in the army of the Revolution, did rank as Captain.

Josiah kept some of his cider in the cellar of the Bates house when his brother William lived there, and one day went to draw a pail full, but none would come out when he turned the sigot. William called out to him, "Try the other end of the barrel, Brother Si, I got all I could out of that end."

Pg. 318 . Record of Chelmsford Men in the Revolution:

Fletcher, Josiah (also given as Jr.), Chelmsford. Private, Capt. Oliver Barron's Co., Col. David Green's Regt., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 9 days; also Capt. John Ford's Co., Col. Bridge's Regt., descriptive list dated June 15, 1775; age 18 yrs.; stature, 5 ft., 6 in.; complexion, light; occupation, farmer; residence, Chelmsford; enlisted, April 28, 1775; service, 3 mos., 11 days; also, company return dated Sept. 25, 1775; also, Capt. John Ford's Co. of Volunteers, Col. Jonathan Reed's Regt.; enlisted Sept. 27, 1777; discharged Nov. 8, 1777; service 1 mo., 13 days; company marched Sept. 30, 1777 to reinforce the Northern Army; also, descriptive list of men raised in Middlesex Co. for the term of 9 mos. from the time of their arrival at Fishkill; Capt. Ford's Co., Col. Spaulding's Regt.; age, 20 yrs.; stature, 5 ft., 8 in.; residence, Chelmsford; engaged for town of Chelmsford; also, list of men returned as

received of Jonathan Warner, Commissioner, by Col. R. Putnam, July 20, 1778; arrived at Fishkill, June 20, 1778.

Pg. 361 Shay's Rebellion

A Pay Roll of Capt. Joseph Emerson Company in Lt. Col. Ebenezer Bancroft's Regt. called upon to rendezvous at Lancaster on the 29 of January, 1787, in order to support Constitutional Government.

Included Josiah Fletcher, Ens., Estab. per month pay ~~£8:0~~ £4:10:0, 5 days service, total wages £1:1:8.
(Mass. Archives, Vol. 191, p. 208)

366 Aug. 18, 1794. It was ordered that the Town Treasurer should pay six shillings (\$1) to each of the following (the list returned by Capt. Josiah Fletcher) "who were minute-men who were called for***"

563 Chelmsford Classical School

The management was entrusted to the following Board of Trustees (1825): Abel Hunt, Rev. Wilkes Allen, Rev. Abiel Abbott, Samuel Bachelder, Oliver M. Whipple, Jonathan Perham, J.S.C. Knowlton, Capt. Josiah Fletcher, Sen., Dr. J.C. Dalton, Owan Emerson, Jr., Cranmore Wallace, Captain William Fletcher, Dr. J.O. Green, Dr. Rufus Wyman, Otis Adams, Joel Adams, Joseph Warren, Captain John Butterfield.

Pg. 641 Rev. Ebenezer Bridge's Diary

June 18, 1782. About 5 o'clock, p.m. there was a prodigious Gust of wind wth. thunder and rain, wch passed by us & seemed for a short space as if it would bear down all before it. Some limbs were blown off fr. a tree by my house. A great deal of this sort was done in ye trees by David Danforth's, & Josiah Fletcher's barn was blown down entirely. It seems as if it was simialr to a hurricane, for it extended but a little way in width. There were other such winds in other places the same afternoon, and much damage.

682 Ordination of Rev. Wilkes Allen, Nov. 1803

A committee consisting of Capt. Josiah Fletcher, Wm. Adams, Esq., Capt. John Butterfield, Ichabod Gibson and Capt. Jonas Pierce was chosen to cause provision to be made for that event, and to prop and secure the meeting house.

Pg. 589 Revolutionary Monument

By the 10th of August (1859), 954 persons had contributed \$1,675, and the contract for the monument had been awarded to Laommi Chamberlain, a Chelmsford contractor, who was the lowest bidder. The monument was to be completed by September 15, and to be of Chelmsford granite.

765 Civil List

Laommi Chamberlain, selectman, 1857, 1858.

Daily Journal & Courier
Lowell, Friday March 26, 1852

Small Farm for Sale

The subscriber offers for sale the Farm lately owned by Capt. Josiah Fletcher, deceased, situated near the Centre Meeting-house in Chelmsford. The buildings consist of a large two story dwelling house well finished throughout and well painted, a good barn and other out buildings. The land consists of the following parcels, viz: Homestead, 14 acres 59 rods of the very best land in that vicinity. The out lands are as follows: An orchard of grafted fruit 2 acres and 3 rods; 1 wood lot on the Pine Plains, containing 7 acres and 4 rods; one other wood lot containing 5 acres and 66 rods, mostly covered with a heavy growth of hard wood.

The above premises are very pleasantly located. A large share of the purchase money can remain secured by mortgage, if desired. For further information apply to Capt. JOSIAH FLETCHER, living near the premises, or to JOEL ADAMS, Esq. Lowell.

John Fletcher

Amherst March 12, 1852

Lowell Courier - Citizen

- Oct. 1, 1908 H. C. Wilson and family have removed from the Crosby house in Crosby place to the so-called Wheeler house in Bridge street.
- Apr. 5, 1909 H. C. Wilson of Bridge street began his duties as clerk at Parkhurst's store on Monday morning.
- Mar. 3, 1916 The Crosby house in Crosby street is to be occupied, about April 1, by T. W. Simpson and family of Lowell.



Barn no longer existing

Nov 1987 R. Fadjo



Nov 1987 R. Fadio



9/4/2004 F. Merriam



8/4/2004 F. Merriam

