Architectural & Historical Report
for
30 Morey Lane
Siasconset, Massachusetts

April 29, 2024

Prepared by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and
Betsy Tyler, Historian for The 'Sconset Trust, Inc.

THE 'SCONSET TRUST, INC.

Preservation Easements

The 'Sconset Trust preserves the unique character of the east end of Nantucket Island in Massachusetts through conservation of areas of open land and preservation of structures of historical and architectural significance in 'Sconset. The Trust works with the entire island community and collaborates with conservation and historic preservation groups to achieve its goals.

This report was prepared to highlight the important architectural and historic features of this house. The Trust hopes that emphasizing such features will encourage current and future owners of historically significant houses to preserve important interior and exterior building features for future generations. The Trust stands ready to assist homeowners in assessing the appropriateness of tools like preservation restrictions and rights of first refusal, which may include tax benefits.

For more information on how the Trust can help, please contact the Executive Director, Julie Ruddick Meade.

The 'Sconset Trust is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please visit the web site at sconsettrust.org.

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1. SUMMARY AND PROJECT SCOPE

Built in the Old Historic District of Siasconset, the property at 30 Morey Lane known as Rose Cottage, is a contributing resource within the Nantucket Historic District, a National Historic Landmark District, which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places as well as a local historic district.

The intent of this study is to present the history of the dwelling at 30 Morey Lane and establish its architectural and cultural significance. This study includes a survey and study of the architecture, form and materials of the existing structure, a survey of historical maps and photographs of the property, an examination of the records on file at the town of Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Probate Court and Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS) records, as well as published and archival sources.

This report was prepared for The 'Sconset Trust, Inc. by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and Betsy Tyler, Historian.

2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 30 Morey Lane is significant as an early nineteenth-century dwelling and contributing resource within the Old Historic District of Siasconset. It retains its original form, footprint, construction details and materials including clapboards, an etched glass front door, interior stair details and distinctive exterior window trim.

3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

30 Morey Lane, also known as Rose Cottage

In *Early Nantucket and Its Whale Houses*, architectural historian Henry Chandlee Forman states that he discovered what he thought might be the remains of "Rose Cottage" (a seventeenth-century building once next to Auld Lang Syne on Broadway, taken down in 1881) in Sunset Heights, "incorporated into a Victorian and Twentieth-Century work." Forman suggests that an ancient fisherman's cottage known as Rose Cottage was moved to Morey Lane and the current dwelling evolved from that structure. Nothing in the construction of 30 Morey Lane supports that supposition, nor is there documentary evidence of the fate of the seventeenth-century cottage. However, a small sign on the cottage at 30 Morey Lane claims that it is the structure Forman was referring to, "built c. 1670, moved c. 1880."

The 1888 Harry Platt map of 'Sconset depicts the footprint of a structure in the general vicinity of the cottage at 30 Morey Lane, but its situation in relation to Morey Lane, and the location of the rear ell of the house do not coincide with the footprint shown on the earliest Sanborn Insurance Company map of the area (1904). Additionally, the chain of title does not reveal any transfer of property before Charles H. Robinson (1829–1915), one of the developers of Sunset Heights, sold the land at the site of 30 Morey Lane to David M. Sylvester (1854–1931) in 1901. The parcel was not one of the delineated lots on the Sunset Heights map. It was outside of that subdivision in an undefined area of the map.

The Sanborn Insurance Company map dated 1904 shows the footprint of the cottage. When Sylvester sold the land and dwelling to Susan Price Rose (1862–1914) in 1910, he stated in the deed that the other buildings on the property—barn, hen house, and workshop—were to be removed. Rose in turn sold the cottage to Gladys Rose Bikle (1881–1944), who owned it from 1913 until 1949. Although both Rose and Bikle were residents of Syracuse, New York, they do not appear to be closely related. Susan Price Rose was born in Canada and emigrated to the U.S. in 1888 (1910 U. S. Federal Census). Gladys Mary Rose was born in England and her mother was born in Wales (1910 U. S. Federal Census). She married Charles E. Bikle in 1904.

The name Rose was associated with the Morey Lane cottage from the time of Bikle's ownership if not earlier, first appearing in the *Inquirer and Mirror* when the Rose Cottage on Morey Lane was rented in the summer of 1916. "Miss Barrett reports the rental of the 'Rose Cottage,' Morey Lane, to Gilbert Lee of Detroit." (I&M 8/5/1916) Nantucket Institute for Savings held several mortgages from Bikle; her estate assessment in 1944 indicates that the value of the house and land on Morey Lane was $3500, less $7400 in mortgages.(Nantucket Probate 2739) Those mortgages were acquired by William C. Brock and Mary B. Lewis, trustees under

the will of Albert Brock, in 1949. They sold the dwelling to Lewellyn G. Ross (1897–1955) and Mary B. Ross (1909–1993) of New Canaan, Connecticut, in 1952. L. G. Ross owned the Ross Travel Agency in New Canaan, and was active in the Democratic party. His probate record reveals that the 'Sconset property was valued at $15,000 in 1955. (Nantucket Probate 3431)

Mary B. Ross married second husband Edgard L. Marston (d.1989) in 1961. She sold 30 Morey Lane that same year to Ewald and Trude Kersten of Great Neck, Long Island, New York.

Henry Chandlee Forman was investigating the architecture of 'Sconset in the 1960s, in preparation for the book that was published in 1966. He undoubtedly spoke with the Kerstens about their house, perhaps misled by the name "Rose Cottage." It is not known who added the small marker with the unfounded dates to the front of the building.

Ewald Kersten (1911–78) was born in Germany, but came to the U.S. in 1938. He founded the Kersten Shipping Agency in New York and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. His wife, Trude (1916–2008), was from an illustrious Jewish family who fled Germany in 1938– her family papers are at The Center for Jewish History in New York City. According to her obituary in the *Inquirer and Mirror*, "Mrs. Kersten's summer home, the Rose Cottage on Morey Lane, was the favorite gathering place for three generations of her family. There, with her accent, wit and elegant style, she would regale old friends and new with stories of her magnificent and well-lived life." (I&M 7/24/2008)

Kersten's twin daughters Monica K. Faxon and Barbara K. Gardner transferred title to the family's 'Sconset cottage to a trust, which then sold the property to Monica and David Faxon in 2011. They held the property until 2020, when it was sold to current owners Laura and William Wrightson.

4. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

4.1 Description

This early twentieth-century house at the western border of the nineteenth-century Sunset Heights subdivision is a one-and-a-half story, rectangular, wood-framed structure with a simple form and plan. Its original gable roof with its ridge parallel to the lane survives together with the rear/east ell. From a study of the structure, form, plan of rooms and maps, there is no evidence of this dwelling having been moved or built earlier than the late nineteenth century.

The long east-west axis of this rectangular form has increased in size beginning with the ownership of Susan Price Rose and Gladys Rose Bikle after 1910 until the Kersten/Faxon ownership ending in 2020. With dormer additions there is now a full second floor. In addition to the original two first floor front rooms and rear kitchen, there is a wrap-around porch partially closed in as an additional sitting room, first floor bathroom, a first floor bedroom with adjoining bathroom, and an open side porch. The second floor is accessed from a front stair running west-east to four bedrooms and three bathrooms. There is a partial basement with a late twentieth/early twenty-first-century concrete foundation.

An original and character-defining feature of the exterior is the front clapboard wall finish. Although nearly half of this front west wall has been enclosed, the original clapboards were left intact. From the historic photograph, the clapboards can be seen on the lower portion of the north wall with painted horizontal trim and weathered shingles above. It can be assumed that the south wall matched the north wall with clapboards.

The original gable ends were constructed with closed-in roof overhangs. All additional roofs, including those of dormer roofs, have included this detail. The closed-in porch does expose its roof rafter ends. All windows are 2/2 wood window sash. The intact original exterior window trim has a unique and complex moulding profile that has survived on four windows: the first floor front/west and side/north at the dining room and the bedroom above. An exterior painted wood, five-panel entry door with etched glass in the upper two vertical panels leads to the interior stair to the second floor. A decorative feature includes two multiple-curved trim boards at the first floor end of the stair stringers.

One small red brick chimney serves the front living room fireplace with full brick exposure at the east

kitchen side. A painted wood mantelpiece of classical style is flanked by built-in cupboards and open book shelves. It is in an unusual off-center location which may have been added when the rear ell increased in its width or it was an exposed exterior chimney. The asphalt roofing material has been changed from the original wood cedar shingles. The original front portion of the house is believed to be supported on brick piers.

All first level floors are natural-finish wood. Second level floors are painted wood. There are several one-over-one raised beveled panel wood doors on the second floor with modified hardware. They represent an eighteenth-century period and as such are believed to have been re-used in this house. There is a minimalist and possibly original design of two horizontal stair railings with a display shelf above the stair.

One of the earliest and unusual additions to this house is a second floor bedroom above and located on top of the front porch roof. A similar addition can be found on the house at 10 Everett Lane.

The front entry porch has been rebuilt with a shingled railing and larger support posts than the original design. The x-cross wood railings, however, have been used at all exterior stairs as well as the south porch and open deck. A stair to the partial basement is located at the southeast corner of the house.

4.2 Alterations/Evolution

The evolution of the house is based upon a study of Sanborn Insurance Company maps, the form and layout of the existing house, and one historic photograph. This evolution has been shown in a schematic, color-coded floor plan on page four. All dimensions are approximate and not based upon field measurements.

Four general periods of development have been identified. The earliest map that any structure appears at 30 Morey Lane is the Sanborn Insurance Company of 1904. As a series of Nantucket maps dating from 1887 to 1949, these maps were designed to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of hazard associated with a particular property and therefore show the size, shape, and construction of dwellings with unrivaled accuracy.

David N. Sylvester owned the land in 1901 and “all buildings thereon” which are believed to have been the barn, hen house, and work shop described in the deed. Sylvester built the house by the time the 1904 Sanborn Insurance map was published. The house is shown as a small rectangular shape with an ell at the rear. The small front/west shed dormer windows may have been built originally to allow for headroom in the two second floor bedrooms.

From 1913 until 1949 the Bikle Family owned the house. It is likely that during this period of thirty-six years, the Bikle families added a front/west and south wrap-around roof-covered porch. Later twentieth-century changes occurred most likely during the successive ownership of the Brock/Lewis and Ross families to include the following:

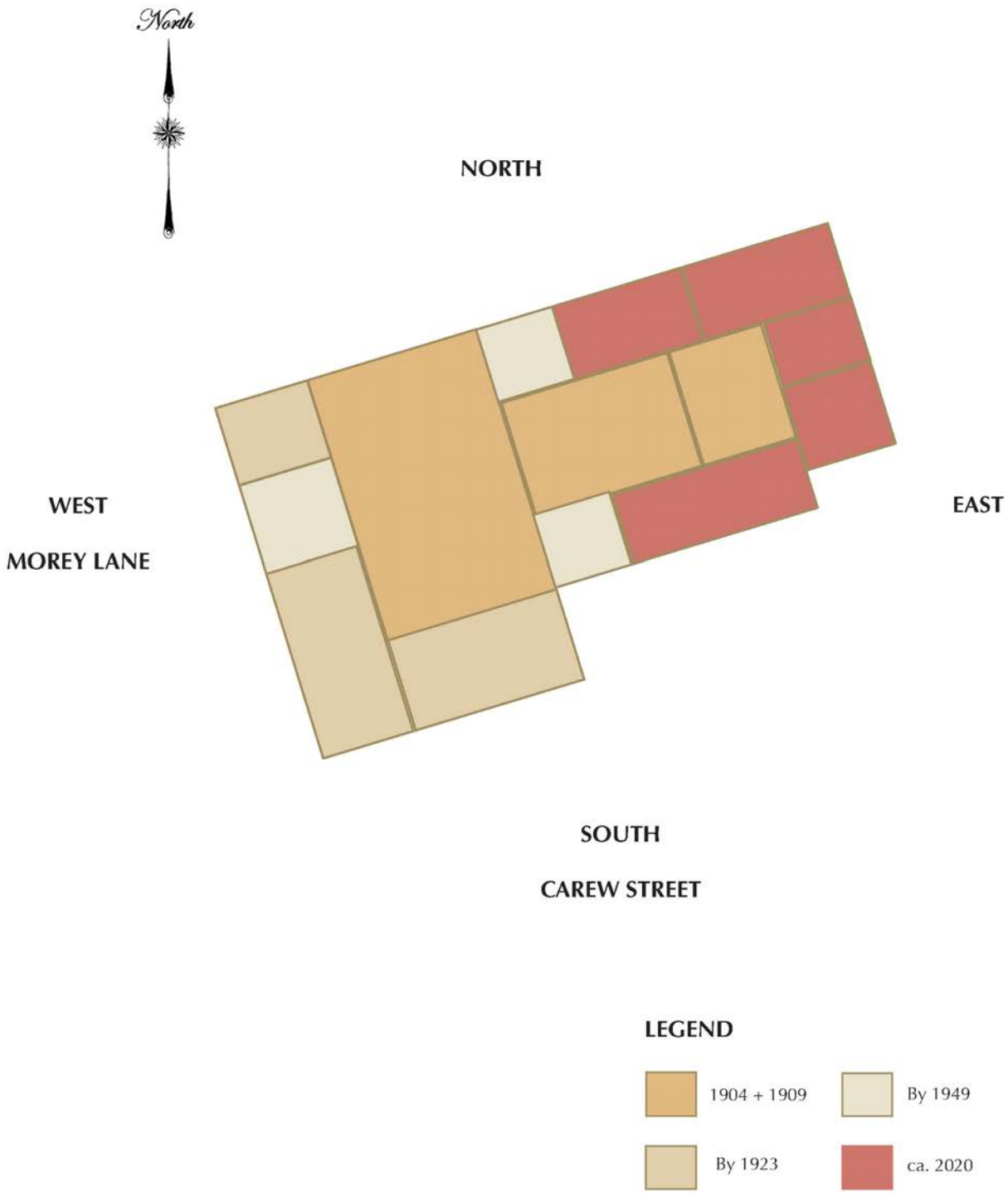
- small first floor additions that increased the width of the rear ell kitchen including a brick chimney;
- a second floor front/west bedroom on top of the porch roof; note the narrow width of the wood floor;
- shed dormers on the east slope of the main gable roof.

During the fifty-nine years of Kersten/Faxon family ownership from 1961 until 2020, the following changes may have been constructed:

- closing in most of the wrap-around roofed porch;
- removal of the north & south wall clapboards and x-cross porch railing;
- adding a roof-covered southern-facing porch;
- adding a second level to the rear ell with two bathrooms and one additional bedroom;

Prior to the Wrightson family assuming ownership in 2020, twenty-first century changes may have included the southern open deck, a new kitchen, bedroom and bathroom within the first floor ell with a partial basement. One window was eliminated from the second floor front bedroom over the porch.

30 Morey Lane
Evolution of Architectural Footprint
1904 - 2020



4.3 Character-Defining Features

The character-defining features at 30 Morey Lane include the following:

- an original form, footprint, and materials with typical period details;
- clapboards at the front/west facade;
- period front door with etched glass;
- simple boxed-in roof overhangs;
- 2/2 wood window sash;
- moulded exterior window trim in four locations: front porch and at northwest wall;
- wood floors, plaster walls and ceilings.

4.4 Outbuildings

There are no outbuildings.

5. PROPERTY INFORMATION

5.1 Property Identification: 30 Morey Lane, Nantucket Assessor's Map: 73.3.2 Parcel 42, 0.17 acres in the SOH zone.

5.2 Setting: This house is located within the Old Historic District of Siasconset, west of the 1872 Sunset Heights subdivision, south of Main Street and walkable to the ocean. There is a combination of lawn, privet hedge, and plantings.

6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

6.1 Published and Archival Sources

Forman, Henry Chandlee. *Early Nantucket and Its Whale Houses* (New York: Hastings House, 1966)

Underhill, Edward F. *The Evolution of Siasconset: A History of the Place from Its Inception to the Present Day*, from original notes by E. F. Underhill, revised and enlarged upon by R. B. Hussey. (*Inquirer and Mirror*, December 28, 1912)

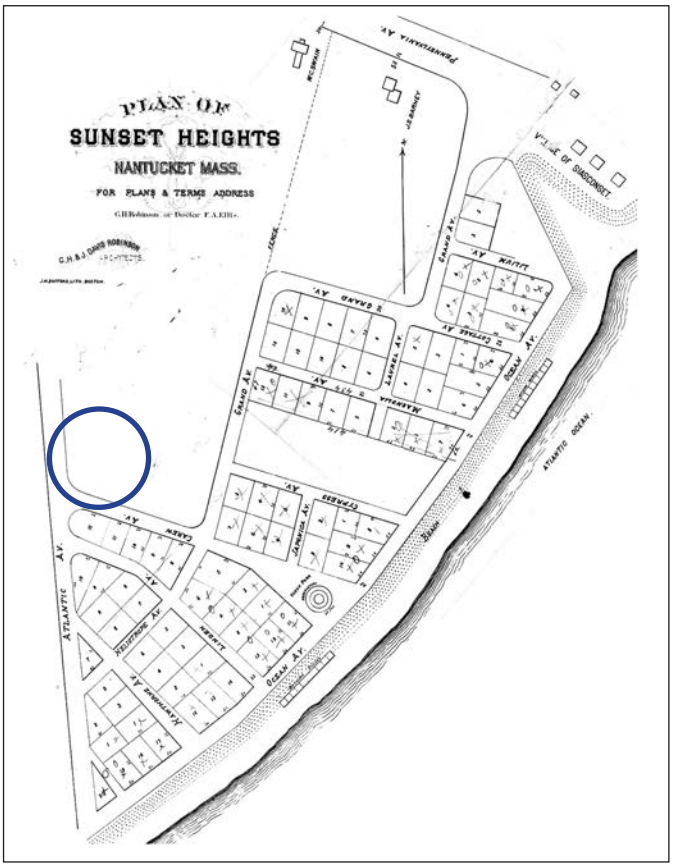
Inquirer and Mirror:
Rose Cottage rented, August 5, 1916; Trude Kersten obituary, July 24, 2008;

6.2 Historical Maps & Plans

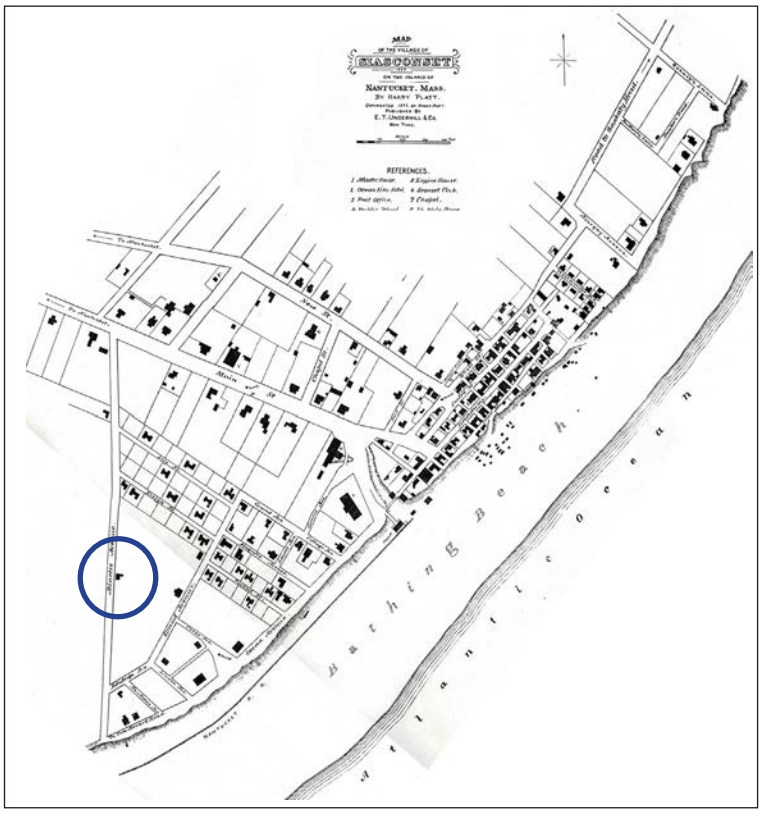
1872 Robinson, C.H. and James D. *Plan of Sunset Heights, Nantucket Mass.* J. H. Bufford, Lith., Boston [1872]

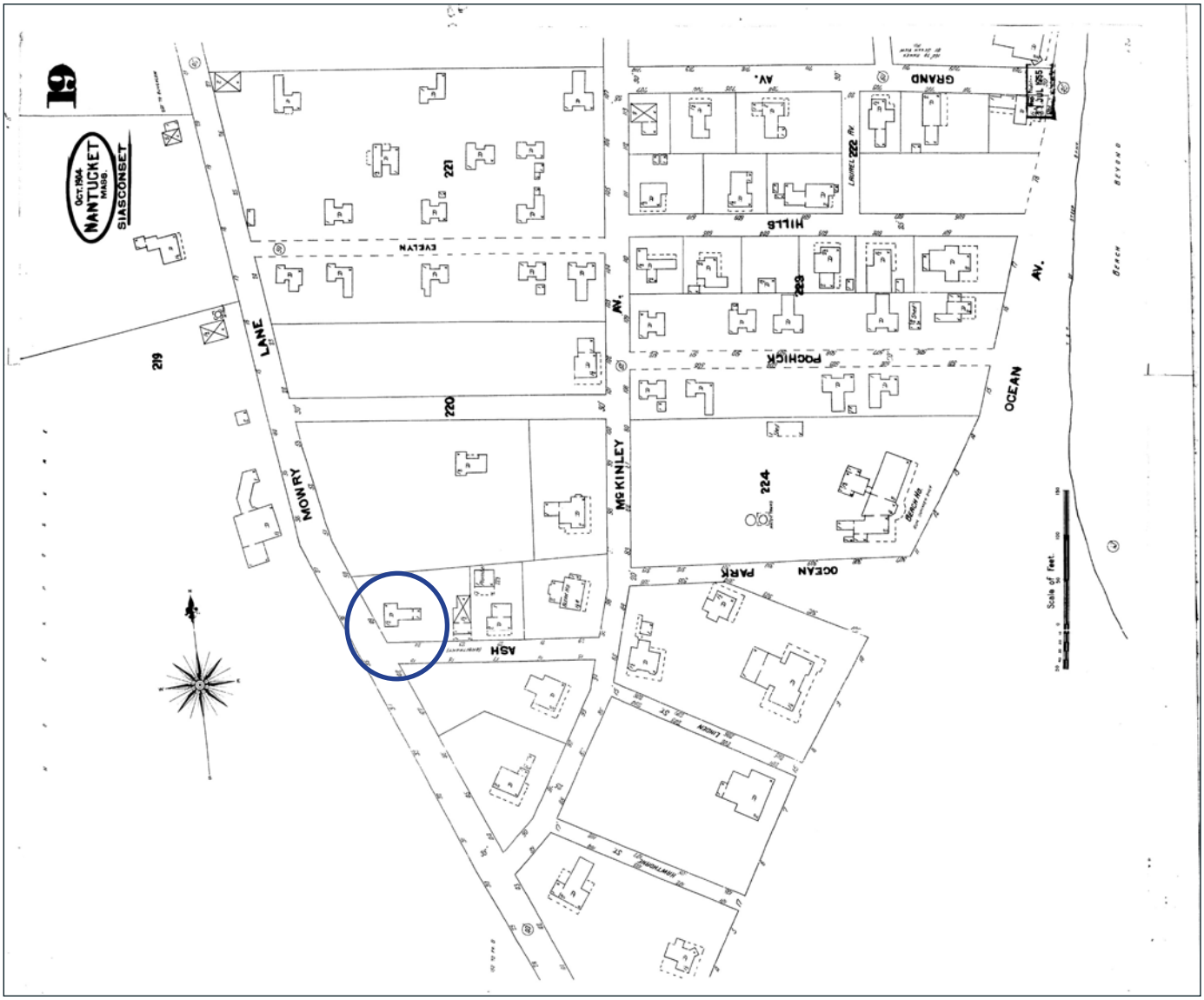
1888 Platt, Harry *Map of the Village of Siasconset on the Island of Nantucket*, published by E. T. Underhill & Co., New York, 1888.

1904 Sanborn Insurance Company, Nantucket, sheet 19
1909 Sanborn Insurance Company, Nantucket, sheet 21
1923 Sanborn Insurance Company, Nantucket, sheet 26
1949 Sanborn Insurance Company, Nantucket, sheet 26

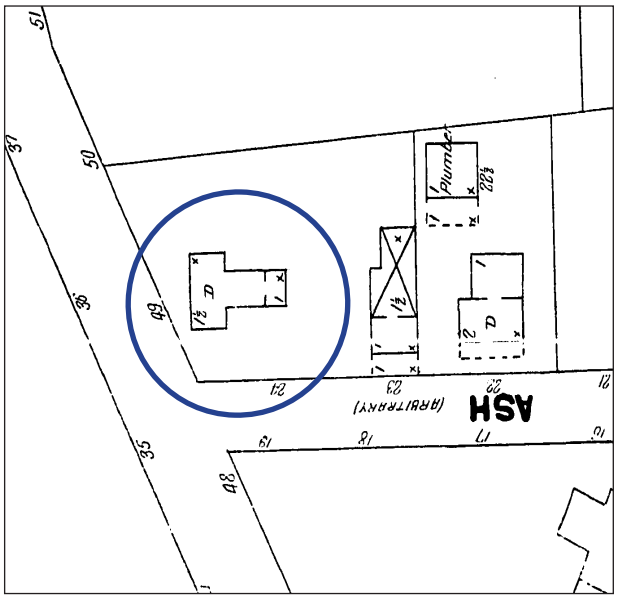


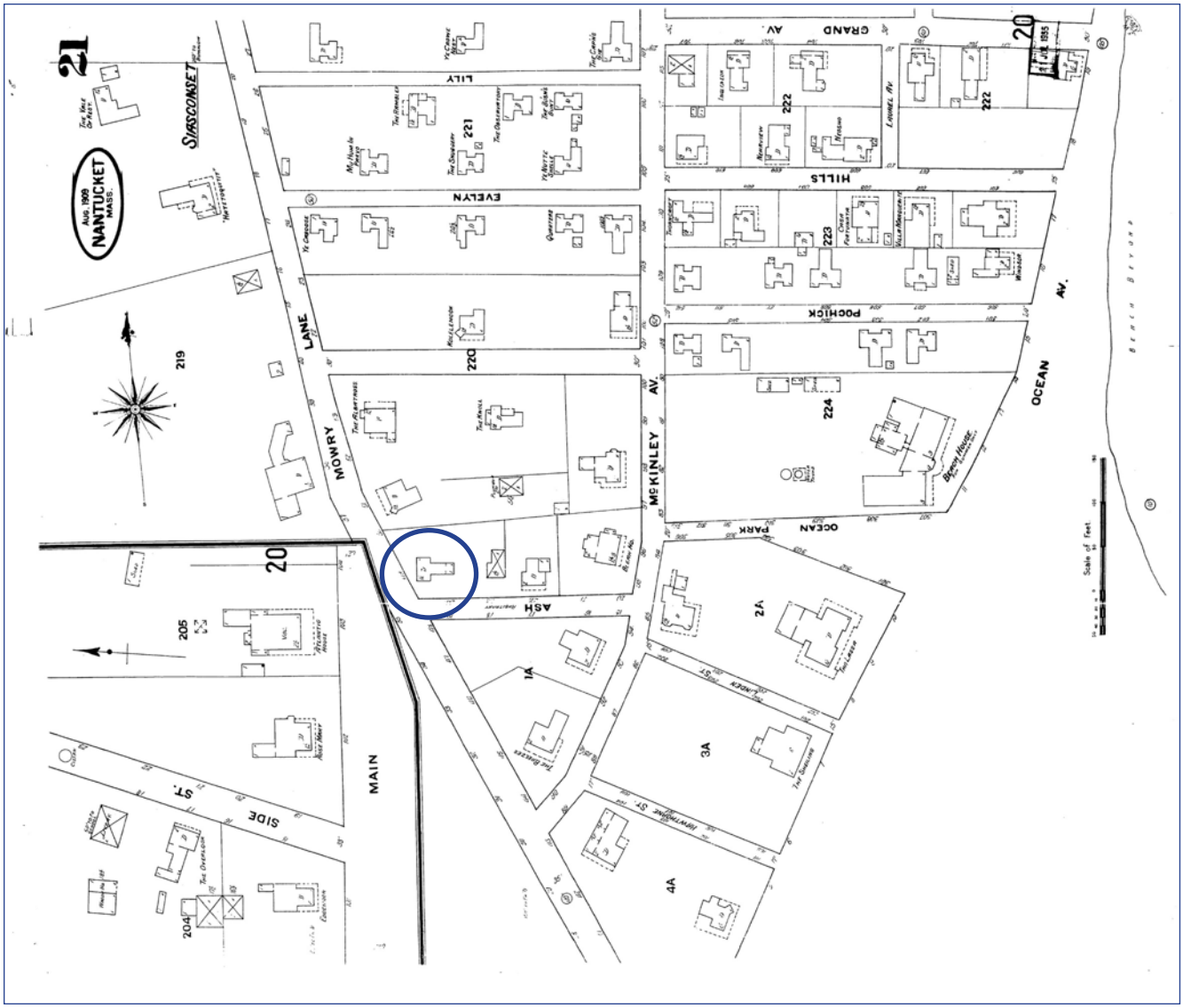
A study of the earliest 1872 map of Sunset Height and the 1888 Platt map (Shown left) of this area of Sconset concluded that the house at 30 Morey Lane did not exist during those years. While the 1888 Platt map (Shown below) does depict the footprint of a structure in the general vicinity of the cottage at 30 Morey Lane, its orientation in relation to Morey Lane, and the location of the rear ell of the house do not coincide with the footprint shown on the earliest Sanborn Insurance Company map of the area (1904).



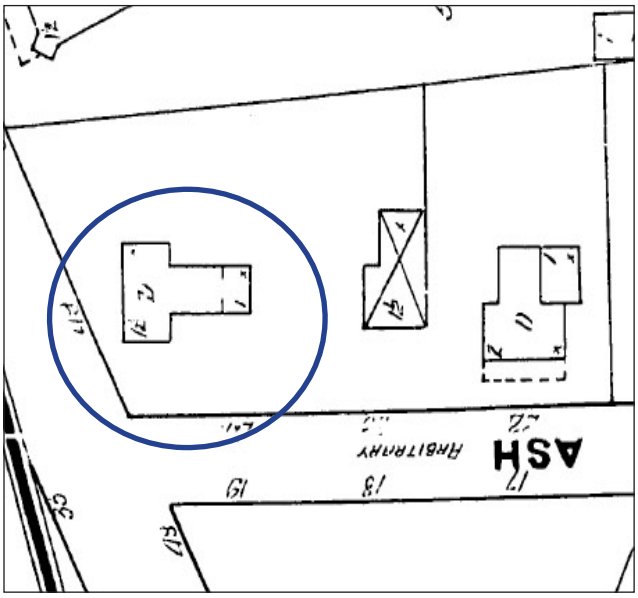


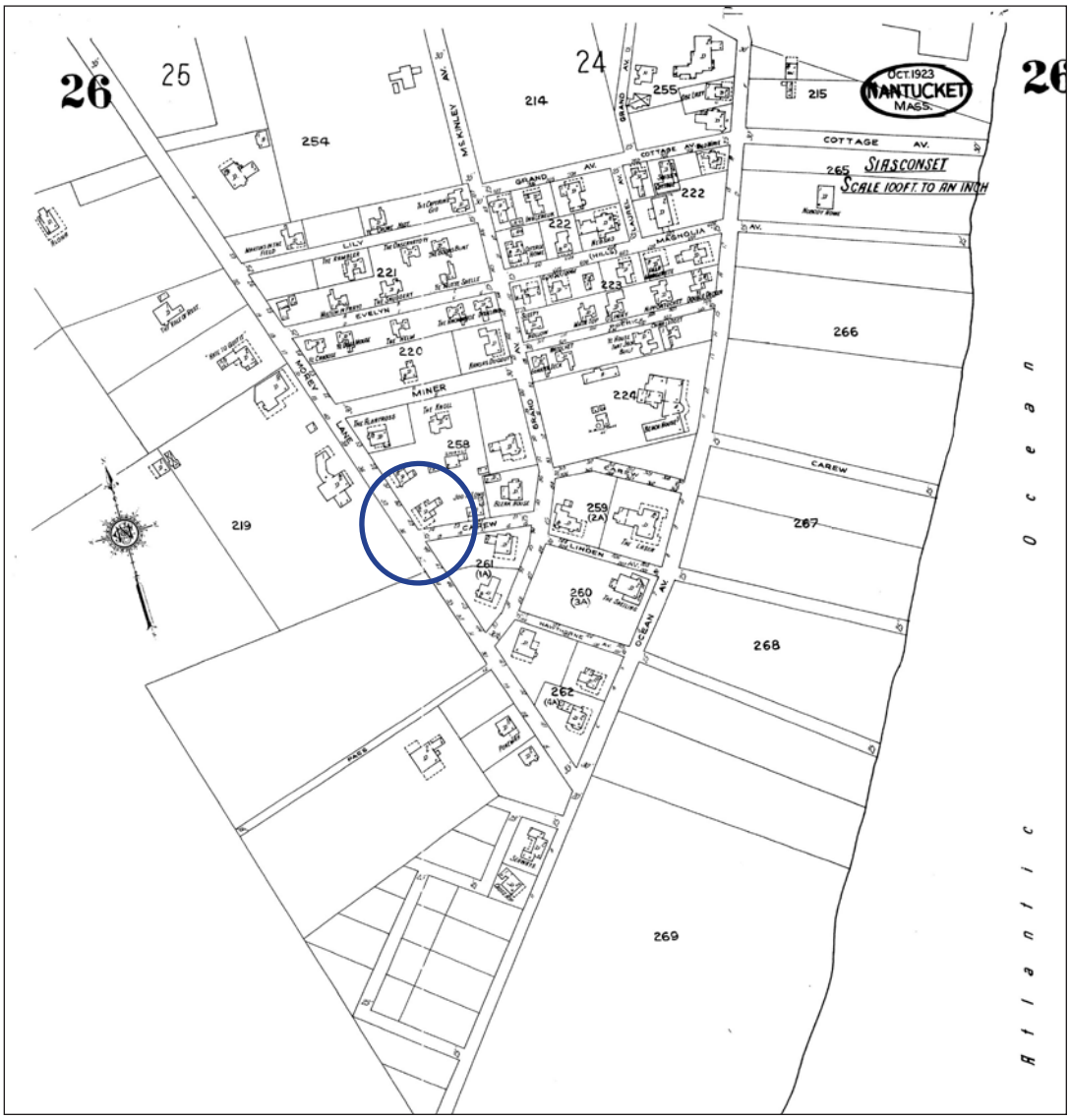
1904 Sanborn Insurance Company,
Nantucket, Sheet 19
Enlarged view of house footprint at right



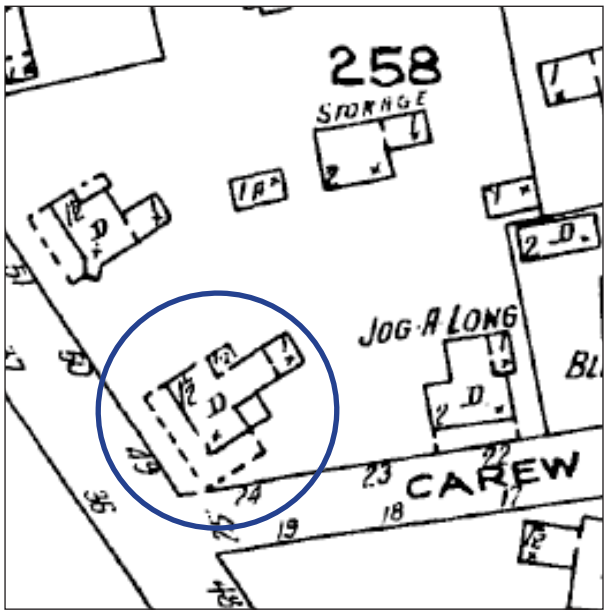


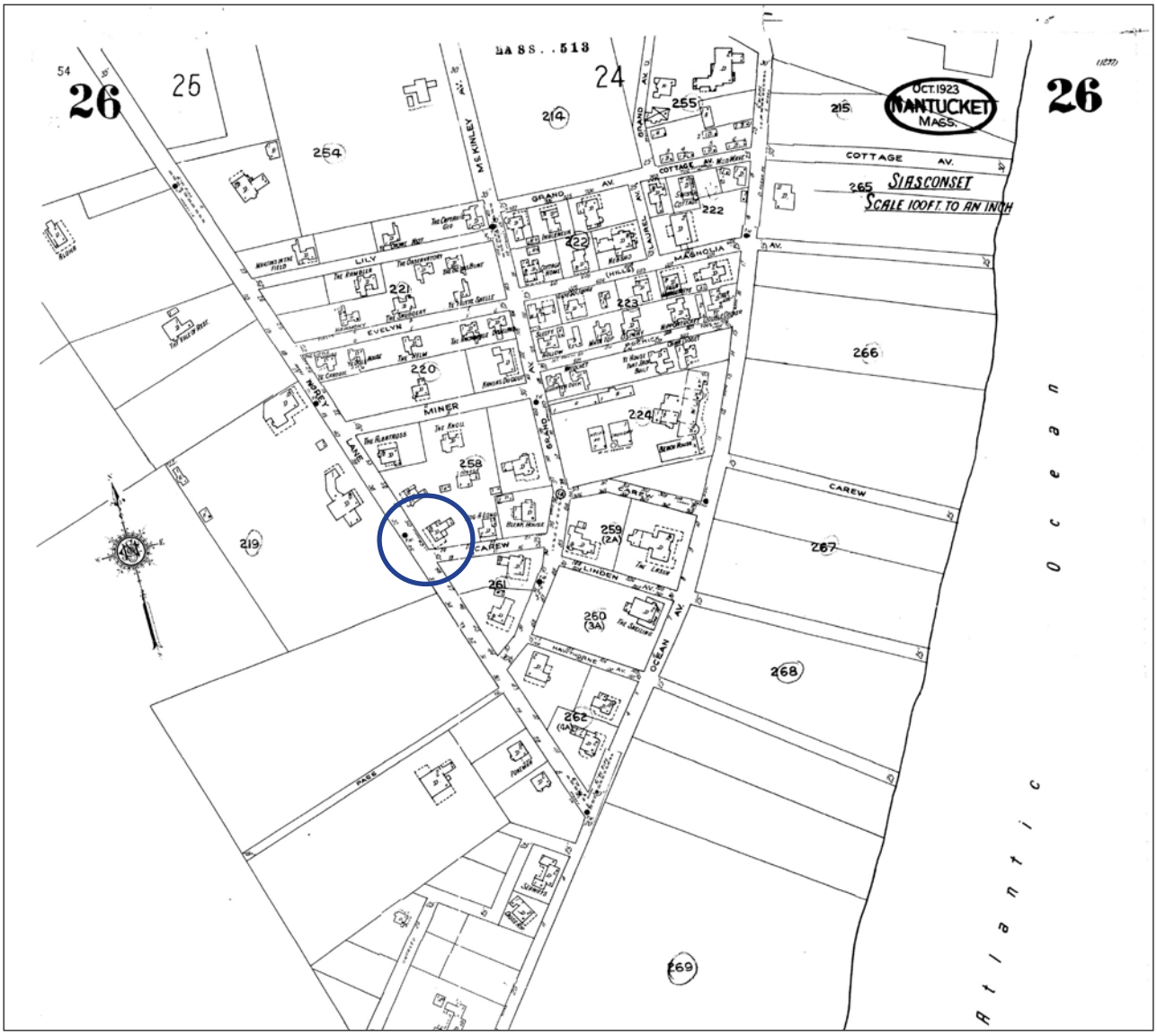
1909 Sanborn Insurance Company,
Nantucket, Sheet 21
Enlarged view of house footprint at right



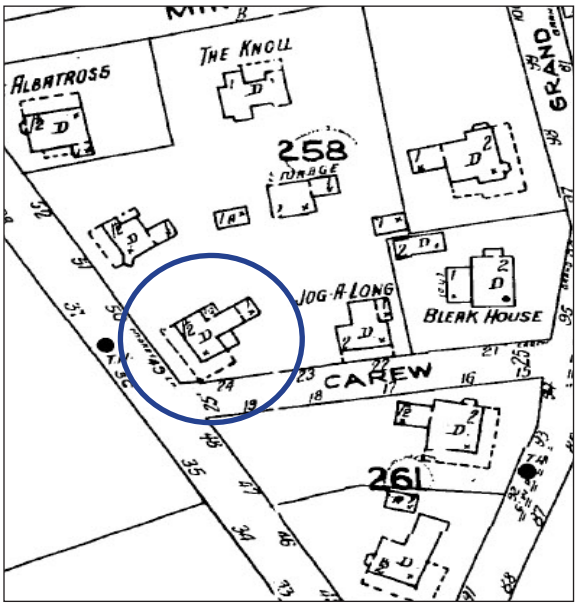


1923 Sanborn Insurance Company,
Nantucket, Sheet 26
Enlarged view of house footprint at right





1949 Sanborn Insurance Company,
Nantucket, Sheet 26
Enlarged view of house footprint at right



6.3 Historical Photograph: Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

NHA SC612-211, Rose Cottage, 1910s

NHA SC612-211, 1910s, Front/West and North Elevations

6.4 Year 2023-2024 Photographs

West/Front Elevation

North & West Elevations

West/Front Porch

West/Front Porch Clapboards

West/Front Porch

Window Trim Detail at West/Front Porch

North Elevation

Window Trim Detail, North Elevation

North Elevation

North Elevation

North Elevation

South Elevation

South Elevation

South Basement Entrance

Historic Front Door

Dining Room

Stair Detail to Second Floor

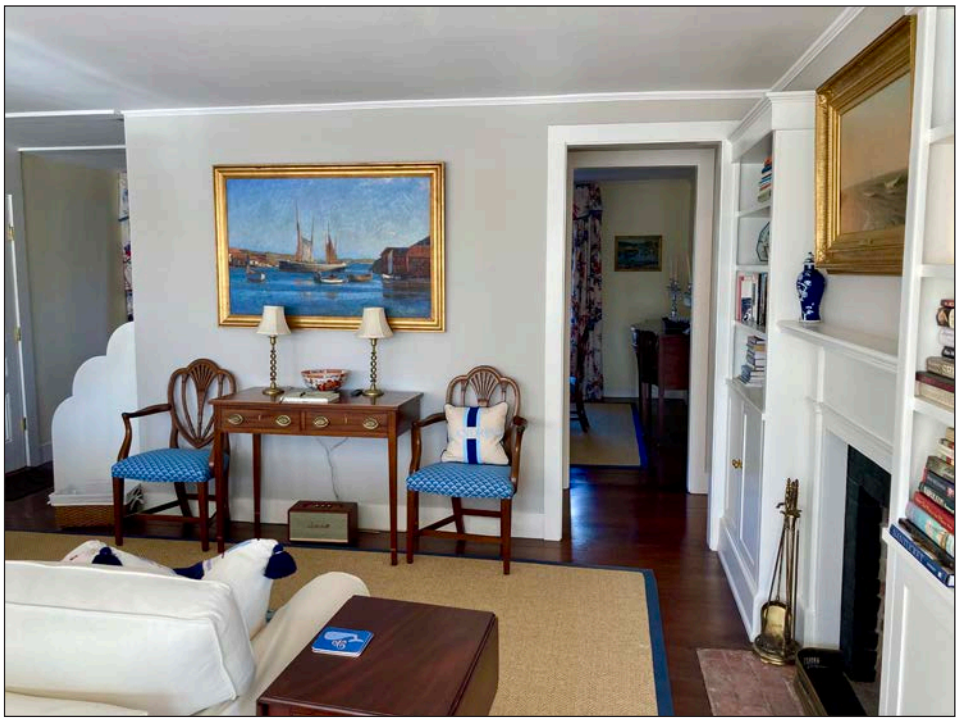
Living Room

Fireplace Wall, Living Room

Living Room

Living Room

Living Room



Living Room

Closed-in-Porch

Closed-in Porch

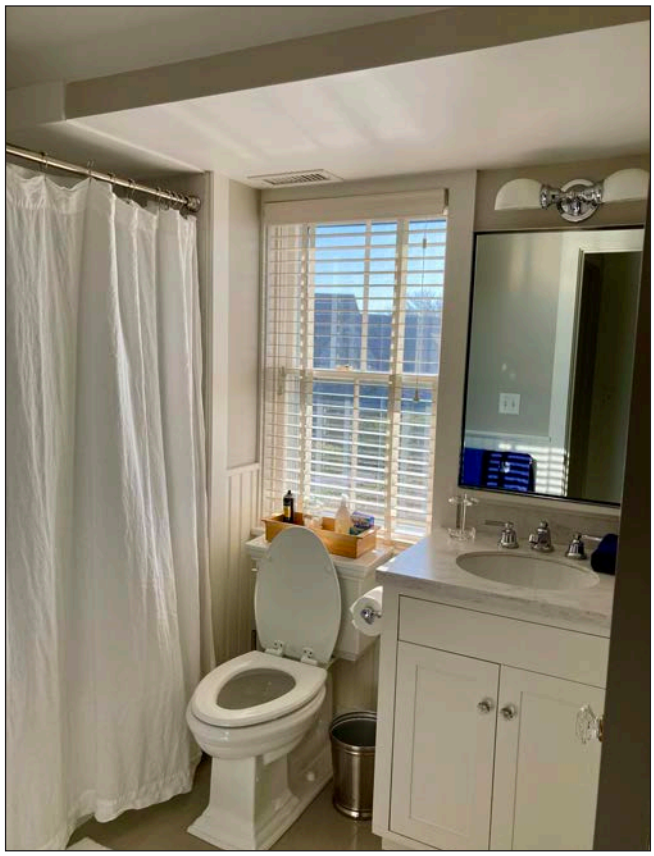
Kitchen

Kitchen

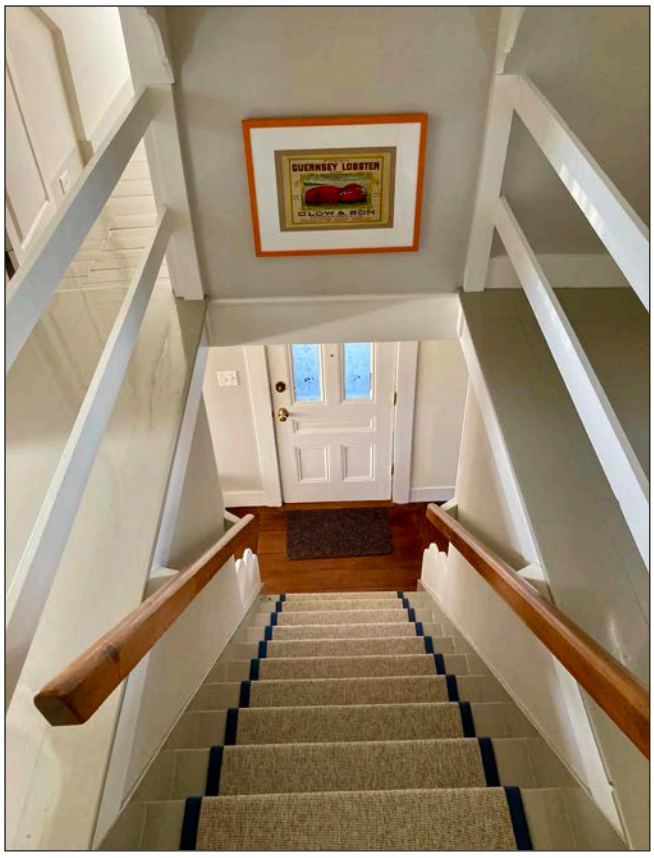
Kitchen

Bedroom, First Floor

Bathroom, First Floor



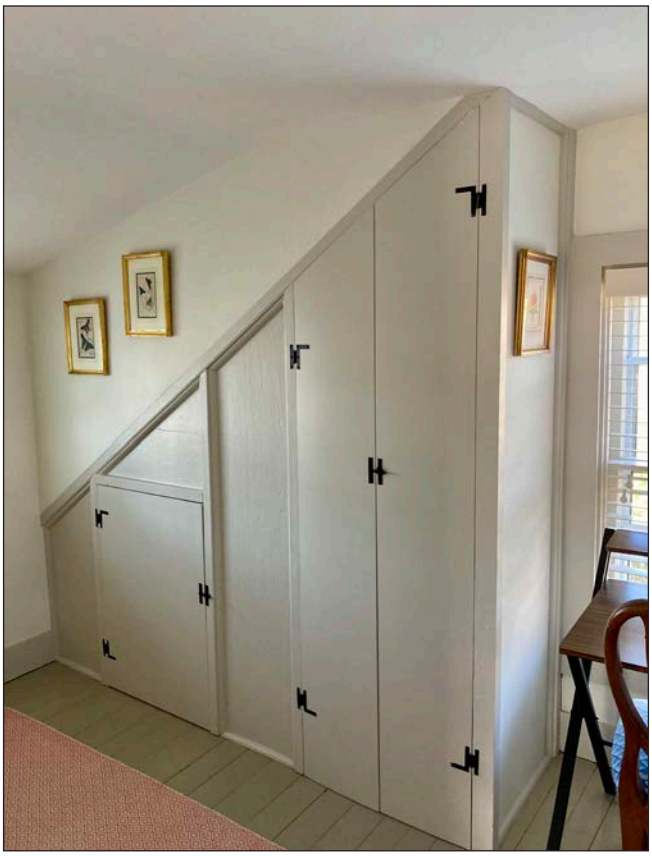
Bathroom, First Floor



Stair to Second Floor

North Bedroom, Second Floor

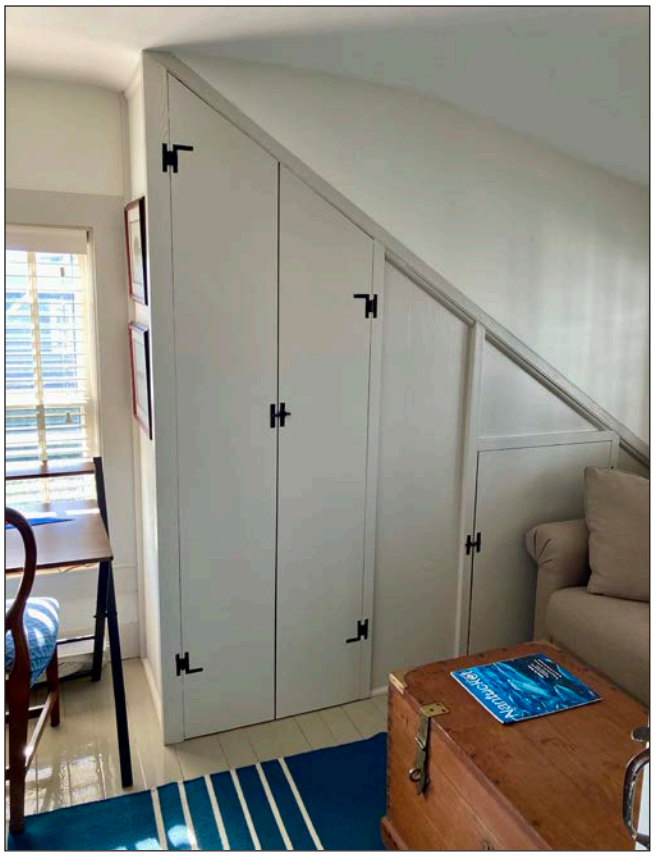
Historic Door, North Bedroom, Second Floor



Built-in Cabinets, North Bedroom, Second Floor

South Bedroom

Historic Door, South Bedroom, Second Floor



Built-in Cabinets, South Bedroom, Second Floor

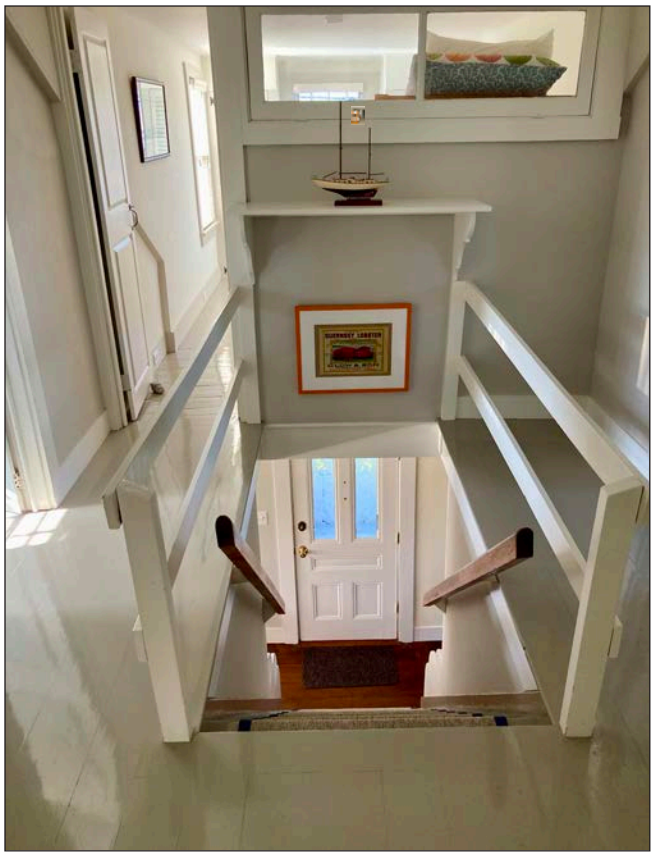
West Bedroom, Second Floor

West Bedroom, Second Floor

Bathroom, Second Floor

East Bedroom, Second Floor

Bathroom, Second Floor



Stair Details

Stair Details

6.5 Chain of Title

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book = NRD

1901 NRD Book 84, pp. 571-72
Robinson to Sylvester

Charles H. Robinson to David M. Sylvester: "a tract of land and all buildings thereon"

1910 NRD Book 92, p. 112
Sylvester to Susan Price Rose

David M. Sylvester to Susan Price Rose: "a tract of land with the dwelling house and no other buildings thereon. Grantor shall have until January 1, 1911 to remove the barn, hen house and work shop therefrom."

1913 NRD Book 96, p. 85
Susan Price Rose to Gladys Rose Bickle

"All that tract or parcel of land situate at a place called Sunset Heights, near the village of Siasconset… together with all the appurtenances and all the estate"

1949 NRD Book 112, p. 314
Nantucket Institution for Savings to William C. Brock and Mary B. Lewis, Trustees under the will of Albert G. Brock

The following mortgages: Susan Price Rose to David M. Sylvester, 1910: Gladys Rose Bickle to NIS, 1918 [*sic* 1913]; Gladys Rose Bickle to NIS, 1927

1949 NRD Book 112, p. 350
Bickle to William C. Brock and Mary B. Lewis

William C. Brock and Mary B. Lewis, Trustees to Albert G. Brock, holder of a mortgage from Gladys Rose Bickle to William C. Brock and Mary B. Lewis, 1949

1952 NRD Book 114, p. 14
Brock and Lewis to Ross

Mary B. Lewis and William C. Brock to Lewellyn G. Ross and Mary B. Ross, 1952

1961 NRD Book 121, p. 114
Ross to Kersten

Mary B. Ross to Ewald and Trude Kersten, 1961

2011 NRD Book 1276, p. 142

Gardner and Faxon (sisters) to Glidden (trustee)

Barbara K. Gardner and Monica K. Faxon to Jessie M. Glidden, Trustee of Morey and Cottage Realty Trust

"That certain parcel of land together with the improvements thereon situate at 30 Morey Lane"

2011 NRD Book 1276, p. 152
Glidden to Faxon

Jessie M. Glidden, Trustee of Morey and Cottage Realty Trust to David C. Faxon and Monica K. Faxon

"That certain parcel of land together with the improvements thereon situate at 30 Morey Lane"

2020 NRD Book 1741, p. 436
Faxon to 30 Morey Lane LLC

David P. Faxon, aka David C. Faxon, and Monica K. Faxon to 30 Morey Lane LLC

"That certain parcel of land together with the improvements thereon now known and numbered as 30 Morey Lane"