

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.228
Historic Name:	Ball, Caleb House
Common Name:	Tarbell, William Jr. - Hunt, Francis House
Address:	265 Ball's Hill Rd
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	North Quarter
Local No:	J4-1374
Year Constructed:	r 1750
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial; First Period
Use(s):	Agricultural; Poultry Farm; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Archaeology, Historic; Architecture
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wood Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Wood Shingle Foundation: Stone, Uncut



DEMOLISHED

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 10:37 AM

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street

J4-1374

CONCORD

228



CONCORD

sect C

(neighborhood or village)

North Concord

265 Ball's Hill Road

ic Name "the old Ball House"

Present dwelling

Original dwelling

of Construction late 17th and early 18th century

Wheeler. Visual Assessment

Form First Period

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation fieldstone

Wall/Trim wood clapboard and shingle

Roof wood and asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures barn

Major Alterations (with dates) early 20th:

central chimney removed, shed-roofed dormer added. 1914: 2/2 sash inserted; 1938: woodshed attached. Modern door.

Condition fair/good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date N/A

Acreage 24 acres

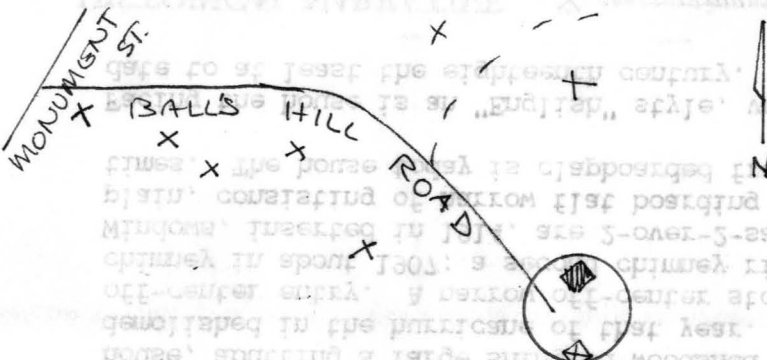
Setting Isolated on hill at end of rural

road. Faces south, side to the road,

surrounded by fields and young woods.

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate North.



Recorded by A. Forbes
research by Cathie Sur

Organization for Concord Hist. Commission

Date (month/day/year) June, 1991

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

A rare surviving First Period, 1 1/2-story gambrel-roofed cottage, #265 Ball's Hill Road is unique in Concord for the retention of both its early form and wooded/agricultural setting. Interior structural evidence indicates that it may have originally been a one-room structure, then expanded to a central-chimney, two-room plan, and later (probably some time in the first third of the eighteenth century) to its "salt-box" form by the addition of the rear leanto. A 1-story ell stretches north from the end of the house, abutting a large shingled woodshed that was built in 1938 to replace one demolished in the hurricane of that year. The facade is three-bay, with a slightly off-center entry. A narrow off-center stove chimney replaced the former massive central chimney in about 1907; a second chimney rises from the rear section of the roof. Windows, inserted in 1914, are 2-over-2-sash. All architectural trim is extremely plain, consisting of narrow flat boarding that has undoubtedly been replaced many times. The house today is clapboarded front and back, with shingled ends and ell.

Facing the house is an "English" style, vertical-boarded, deteriorated barn that may date to at least the eighteenth century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ *see continuation sheet*

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Although the construction date of this house may never be precisely determined, future research may show that it is one of the oldest houses in Concord. Definitely standing by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, family lore and interior structural evidence indicate that part of is likely to have been built in about 1685. According to the owner and to Ruth Wheeler, it stands on property that was deeded by a Ball father to his son in that year. This was probably Nathaniel to Nathaniel, Jr., and it is likely that the latter built the first part of the house shortly thereafter. It passed to Nathaniel, Jr.'s son, Caleb Ball, (b. 1690) who married Experience Flagg in 1713.

There is also somewhat conflicting evidence that Caleb Ball bought a farm in about this location east of today's Monument Street near the Concord River in 1750, but it is not known who owned it before that. Deed research, although it may not pinpoint the date of construction, may be needed to clarify the line of the house's early ownership. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☒ *see continuation sheet*

Interviews with owner, 1991.

Keyes.

Maps, plans and atlases: 1830, 1852, 1856, 1875, 1889, 1906.

Wheeler, Concord, Climate for Freedom.

Wheeler House File.

Shattuck. (Cont.)

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CONCORDThe Old Ball House

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s) Form No.

228

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Nathaniel Ball, Jr., Caleb's father, was the son of Nathaniel Ball, who settled by 1664 within the present town of Bedford in an area which was part of Concord plantation until 1729. It is possible that this farm was part of his original land. A tax valuation of 1717 shows that several members of the Ball family had real estate and livestock at that time. One Nathaniel Ball was an average farmer, possessing 1 horse, 2 oxen, and 4 cows, and a small amount of real estate. The other, (whether senior or junior is unknown,) had much more real estate, and was relatively well off, with 2 horses, 2 oxen, 5 cows, and 3 sheep. Caleb, (who by that year may have been living in the Ball house on Lexington Road [NR],) possessed real estate of average value, 1 horse, 4 oxen, and 2 cows.

The property appears to have passed to Caleb's son **Reuben Ball**, and hence to **Nehemiah**, one of his five sons, four of whom moved "down east", leaving their brother with the old farm.

By the early nineteenth century this farm belonged to **W. Tarbell**, who owned it at least until 1856. By 1875 it is shown under the name of "D. Hancock". **Joseph Middleby** was here by 1886. Other names associated with the farm in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century are Shaw, and Meyers, the latter a baker from West Medford who tried farming briefly.

In 1886 the farm was purchased by **Christian and Caroline Benson**. Their son C. Sanford Benson was employed for many years by William Brewster as a gardener on the nearby October Farm. (See Form # .) The property remains in the Benson family today.

Balls Hill Road was laid out in 1747, but was not officially accepted by the town until the middle of this century. In the tradition of naming rural roads after the farms along them, it was known as Benson Road from the end of the nineteenth century until 1952, when it became officially Balls Hill Road.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Town directories.

Mass. Registry of Deeds.

Joslin, Elmer. "Notes on the Acceptances or Layouts of Public Ways in the Town of Concord." 1956.



FORM B - STRUCTURE SURVEY
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

1. Is this structure historically significant to:
Town _____ Commonwealth _____ Nation _____

Structure has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

Agriculture	Commerce/Industry
Architecture	Science/Invention
Art/Sculpture	Travel/Communication
Education	Military Affairs
Government	Religion/Philosophy
Literature	Indians
Music	Development of Town/City

2. Town Concord

Street Balls Hill Rd

Name Calvin Ball H.

Original Use _____

Present Use _____

Present Owner _____

Date 1710 Style _____

Source of Date _____

Architect _____

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered _____

IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: _____

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard front; shingle side Brick Stone Other _____

STORIES: 1/ 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency _____ Simple/Complex

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony _____ Recessed _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard lean to
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament

Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: transom light

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied very small

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured _____

OUTBUILDINGS _____ LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below

6. Footage of structure from street *
Property has _____ feet frontage on street

Recorder _____

For _____

Photo E-09-067-1103

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)

* Balls Hill Rd is dirt +
almost private drive
one car width

A-3 due to date
H-6
4-4

FOR USE WITH IMPORTANT STRUCTURES (Indicate any interior features of note)

Fireplace

Stairway

Other

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

Typical Concord Farm House 18th C

Eliza Ball - widow

REFERENCE (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

newspaper art 11/4/37

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Owner: _____

Deed Information: Book Number _____ Page _____

Registry of Deeds

CON. 228

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Concord "Old Ball House"
265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s) Form No.
228, 996, 1803, 1804

Additional information by Anne Forbes, March, 2001:

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Close inspections of the property in November, 2000 and February and March, 2001 provided additional information about the buildings and the evolution of the old Ball farmstead, and have contributed to a revised assessment of its evolution. Since the 1991 inventory form was written, four photographs of the property taken in 1904 and 1918 by Herbert W. Gleason have also come to light, and help to pinpoint some of the changes that took place early in the twentieth century. Due to the long period during which both the house and barn survived without substantial change, however, both buildings hold considerable potential to yield more information through future examinations using a building archaeology approach.

"Old Ball House" (#228)

Building type/plan: The house is a south-facing, 1 1/2-story, side-gambrel, single-pile, formerly center-chimney building. A full-width rear leanto with the same roof pitch as the upper main roof slope spans the length of the back wall and continues past the east end wall of the house into a six-foot-long jut-by. The roof of the jut-by is now side-gabled, apparently one of the results of the rebuilding of the east sections after the 1938 hurricane. It continues several feet east over a narrow shed, which is abutted by a long gable-roofed shed/ell extending to the south.

Original building: Although the building has a traditional date of the end of the seventeenth century, field examination indicates that the main part of the Ball House--a two-room plan with center chimney bay--was probably constructed in one building campaign closer to the middle of the eighteenth century. No joinery or finish that would be specifically diagnostic to the First Period (before ca. 1725) was observed, although the house contains some transitional features which are found throughout much of the eighteenth century in vernacular houses in eastern Massachusetts. There is a full fieldstone basement under the east room and the center entry, and a crawl space beneath the west room.

Additions/secondary masses: The rear leanto appears to have been added relatively early--probably within a generation after the main house was built. Its space was filled largely by a rear kitchen with fireplace let into the back of the center chimney. A small room, probably a bedroom, was partitioned off from the kitchen at the west end of the leanto. Its partition wall was removed, probably early in the twentieth century, opening the leanto into one large, undivided space. The jut-by today is divided into a front passage and a rear pantry, with the enclosed stairs to the basement and loft located in the northeast corner. There is a full basement under the jut-by and the east part of the leanto.

The 1904 photographs of the house show that a long shed extended south from the east end of the jut-by, its end positioned well forward of the front plane of the house. The leanto roof of the shed sloped down to the east, leaving a high clapboard west wall facing what would have been a narrow work-yard between the shed and the house. Opening into the west wall of the shed were three vertical-board doors and at least one window. This long shed was shortened by several feet between 1904 and 1918, and it was ultimately destroyed in the Great Hurricane of 1938. Shortly afterward, the present gable-roofed shed/ell combination was built, and the roof of the jut-by was changed to a gable.

Other major changes: The massive center chimney, still shown in the 1904 photographs, was removed about 1907 and replaced with a narrow off-center stove chimney. The three first-story fireboxes were blocked up and the bake-ovens opening into the east room and rear kitchen were removed. The enclosed front stair, which ascended against the front of the chimney stack from west to east in the lobby entrance, was also removed, and a new enclosed stairway built in place of the former chimney stack, ascending from

[X] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places*. If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.

RECEIVED

OCT 01 2001

MASS. HIST. COMM

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Concord

"Old Ball House"
 265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s)

Form No.
 228, 996, 1803, 1804

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

just west of the leanto fireplace position toward the front of the garret. (A basement stairway--probably the original one--located directly under the front stairs, was taken out either at that time or somewhat earlier). Parts of the interior of the house were lathed and plastered for the first time when these changes were made--including the east first-story room, the center and east part of the rear kitchen, and the entire main garret, which was divided at that time into two bedrooms flanking a center stairhall.

The 1918 photograph shows several of the significant changes to the main house that had taken place since 1904. The two narrow chimney stacks still in place today--one just west of the center of the ridge, and another in the northeast part of the leanto--are shown. The 1904 photos show the front lower roof slope of the house broken only by a small skylight over the front entry or stairwell; by 1918, the present shed dormer, with its three 2-over-2-sash windows, is shown. Other window sash, including at least one 6-over-9-sash in the west end of the garret, had also been replaced by 2-over-2's by that time. (According to the former owner, the windows were replaced in 1914, although some 2/2's appear in a 1904 photograph). In both the 1904 and 1918 photos, all the visible walls of both house and attached sheds appear to be clapboarded.

Character of the frame:

The distinctive gambrel roof is a rare local example of a type of roof construction which was appearing in eastern Massachusetts by the middle of the eighteenth century. Some features of the post-and-beam first-floor framing visible in the basement, however, are of a type found in First Period (pre-1725) structures, as well.

The main house has flared ("gunstock") corner- and chimney posts, and transverse or binding (front to back) summer beams approximately 8 3/4 inches wide and 8 inches deep. The bottom faces of plates and girts are positioned on the same plane, and protrude a few inches into the principal rooms. Ceiling joists visible through a hole in the plaster of the east room are 4 by 3 inches, spaced 21 inches on center. At least one joist there displays a very narrow bevel or chamfer along its lower edge--a type of decorative finish which was used in buildings where joists were meant to be left exposed, rather than covered with plaster. Another appears in the jut-by.

The rear end of each second-story summer beam, visible from the loft of the leanto, is half-dovetailed into the main rear plate, which measures approximately 5 1/4 inches wide and 8 inches high. The six principal lower rear rafters, approximately 5 by 6 1/4 inches, all have mortises for former purlins cut into their outer faces. Some of those purlins appear to have been reused as leanto rafters, as the four- and five-inch widths of the mortises match the dimensions of those rafters. Purlins of varying sizes, many of them apparently reused stock, lend support to the leanto roof.

While there has been some rebuilding of the sills, and the joists under the east room have been replaced, much of what appears to be the original first-floor frame remains visible in the basement. It is possible that some of its timbers may have been reused, or may remain from an earlier phase of the building, as they are of a type consistent with First-Period construction. Both transverse first-story summers are framed into the front (south) sill with a tusk tenon. A joint in the front sill just west of the main doorway is a long horizontal lapped joint with a 14 1/2-inch overlap and angled ends. This type of angle-ended joint, which is unusually refined for its horizontal orientation, is similar to one which appears across town in the front sill of the Hosmer Homestead at 138 Baker Avenue (NR), the first section of which is believed to have been built about 1710. As is common over a crawl space, the joists or sleepers under the west room are

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community	Property
Concord	"Old Ball House" 265 Balls Hill Road
Area(s)	Form No. 228, 996, 1803, 1804

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

round logs, flattened on top. They are spaced 29 inches on center. What appear to be the original rectangular joist cogs in the 11-inch-wide summer beam under the east room are 3 3/4-inches wide, 4 inches deep, and positioned 22 inches on center. The leanto floor is supported on log joists running north from the rear sill of the main house to the rear sill of the leanto. The remains of a studded wall spans the basement space between the leanto and the east part of the main house.

Interior finish and ornament:

Interior finish of the house remains from several periods. Gaps in the ceiling plaster in the east first-story room (apparently the original kitchen) and the rear leanto kitchen reveal soot-blackened joists and floorboards, indicating that those ceilings were formerly unplastered. The surface of the rear plate inside the old chimney bay is also blackened, indicating that it, too, was originally exposed. It is cut back toward the center, probably to make room for the chimney extension to the leanto fireplace.

The ceilings of the west room and the little room in the leanto behind it, however, may have been plastered from the beginning. Breaks in the ceiling plaster of the former west leanto room reveal riven lath, fastened with wrought nails.

In the finished rooms, plates, girts, corner posts and narrow transverse summer beams are covered with a type of post-First Period ovolo-edged casing similar to that seen in houses of the 1730s and 1740s in the Concord area. In the east room, the casing of the summer beam is fitted against the upper floorboards and cut around the joist ends--a transitional type of finish in which casing was applied to the main timbers, but the ceiling was left unplastered. In the same room, the upper portion of the front casing of the rear chimney post, covered with an early green paint, extends several inches into the chimney bay past the later plastered fireplace wall, its contour probably shaped to fit against the recessed face of the former center chimney. Interior doors include batten doors constructed of feather-edged sheathing in the less formal east room or early kitchen, and raised-field panel doors in the more formal west room, or parlor. Considerable period hardware is present, including Suffolk latches and strap hinges. The two raised-field panel doors of the former cabinet north of the east room fireplace have foliated H hinges. In the leanto, a five-foot-wide, floor-to-ceiling section of horizontal feather-edged sheathing covers the south wall just east of the position of the former kitchen fireplace. The same type of paneling is present on the south and east walls of the jut-by. Recent investigation under the wall plaster of the east room reveals that its front and back wall are also paneled with horizontal feather-edge sheathing, painted with a deep red paint, and covered with several layers of wallpaper. Wallpaper is evident on other walls, as well, including the back of the rear lobby entrance partition wall in the chimney bay, where its edge follows the diagonal lower edge of the former stair.

While the ceilings of the east room and the leanto kitchen remained unplastered, the first story underwent considerable updating in the early nineteenth century, when federal-style moldings and fireplace surrounds were installed in both the east and west rooms. It may have been at this time that the upper rear fireplace wall of the east room was plastered, the fireplace opening reduced, and a new bake oven (since removed) built to its north side. Also on that wall, a small amount of paneling, and wood doors to the bake oven and a chimney cabinet made of planed boards, may date to the same remodeling.

About a hundred years later, possibly during the ca. 1907 renovation that included the removal of the center chimney and the plastering of the second-story spaces, most of the leanto ceiling, and the ceiling and remaining three walls of the east room were lathed with circular-sawn lath fastened with wire nails, and plastered.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
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Concord

"Old Ball House"
265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s)

Form No.
228, 996, 1803, 1804

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Barn (#1803)

The metal-roofed, side-gabled English barn that stands facing north, about twenty yards southwest of the house, is an important part of this old farmstead. Although structural evidence suggests that it is likely to date to the eighteenth century, more research into local tax records should be done to determine if a barn is listed on the property before 1800.

The barn is a building of three main structural bays, with the typical arrangement of slightly off-center drive-floor flanked on the west end by a wide, open haymow bay, and on the east by a narrower livestock bay. While most of the building is open to the roof, the south part of the east bay is covered by flooring to form a small loft. A horizontal rail part way up the south portion of the west wall, which aligns with open mortises in the nearby posts, indicates that the south part of the haymow bay was enclosed in some manner--possibly for a livestock pen. Mortises at the same level in most of the posts of the east livestock bay suggest that similar rails may have been part of an enclosure there, as well.

The building measures 30 by 40 feet--perhaps the most popular size for Massachusetts barns as listed on the state's 1798 Federal Direct Tax census. Much of its rough-hewn, post-and-beam frame appears to be original, including corner posts with flared shoulders, and diagonal braces at the main intersections of posts, plates, and girts. The plates measure 9 by 9 inches, the end girts about 6 1/2 by 8 3/4 inches. The two front-to-back girts on either side of the drive aisle each rest on a hewn post positioned several feet in from the south wall of the building; a short, angled strut rises from each of these girts to the south principal rafter above it. The lower faces of an additional set of principal rafters located in the middle of the westernmost bay have been cut away; the absence of any mortises in the bottom or interior faces of the plates below them indicates that they were never supported by posts or tied by a girt or tie beam. The rest of the roof structure, which has common rafters of approximately 2 x 6" stock lumber meeting at a narrow ridge board, appears to date to the early twentieth century. These rafters are notched over the rear plate, but at the front plate, the rafter feet are furred out with short pieces which form decorative exposed rafter ends--a popular early twentieth century feature. The hewn principal rafters display four sets of open mortises--apparently remaining from an older purlin roof which would have had vertical roof boards. The present roof boards are laid horizontally.

Most of the barn is sided with vertical boards fastened with cut nails to horizontal nailers. Above the end girts, however, the wall is sheathed with horizontal boards nailed to studs. The sheathing of the upper portion of the east end wall consists of wide, beveled boards fastened with wrought nails. While the main north front of the west and middle bays is presently open to the weather, a vertical-board double-leaf door on large strap hinges is still in place on the east bay.

A long leanto cow stable spanning the rear (south) wall and extending several feet to the west beyond the main barn, which is clearly shown in one of the Gleason photographs of 1904, appears to date to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Most of this section has horizontal sheathing; the east end is clapboarded. The interior of the leanto is whitewashed, and its roof is supported by log joists. A line of wooden cow stanchions is still in place along most of its length. A second, ca. 1930s leanto of nailed stock lumber, sided with the novelty siding typical of the period, abuts the east wall of the building. It is presently used as a garage. The stone foundation and floor structure of another addition, without walls or roof, abuts the west end of the barn.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Form No.
228, 996, 1803, 1804

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Beneath the barn is a full basement. As it is unlikely that an eighteenth-century barn would have had a basement, the building may have been raised up, possibly repositioned, the foundation built and the ground around it regraded to create the type of banked cellar storage area that was becoming popular by the middle third of the nineteenth century. The west and the west end of the south foundation walls are exposed, and have wide openings that would have provided easy access to the manure that was probably collected there, especially during the winter months. In various places the fieldstone foundation walls show joints and changes of stonework indicating that the basement was extended under the rear leanto and west addition when those sections were built. There are several clues, including trimmed feet of some of the posts, and sections of siding which extend well below the present west sill, that indicate the barn floor was originally about a foot lower than the present replacement floor.

Two other intact structures survive from the expanding farmstead that eventually included several small outbuildings and structures. The oldest, of uncertain date, is a fieldstone, earthen-covered **root cellar** (#996) built into a low hill about twenty yards north of the barn. Its opening faces south, toward the barn. The square space inside measures 6 by 7 feet, and has a five-foot-high ceiling made up of large stone slabs. One stone measures 4 by 7 feet. There is some speculation that this structure may actually be of Native origin. Examination by a professional archaeologist would help to determine whether that is the case.

Between the root cellar and barn is a small one-car, gable-roofed, novelty-sided **garage** (#1804) of about 1930-40. Ruins of at least four other small outbuildings, including one eight-feet square that was apparently a brooder house, are located around the perimeter of the farmstead. (See Sketch Map).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Corroborated by the findings of the recent interior inspection of the Ball House, according to additional research by historian Ruth Wheeler which apparently post-dates other material in the Wheeler House File, **Caleb** and **Experience Ball** are more likely than either Nathaniel or Nathaniel Ball, Jr. to have built the "Old Ball" house. They lived on Lexington Road east of the town center until 1716/1717, and may have moved to this part of town shortly after that. Caleb Ball died in 1734, and in 1743 Concord town records report that a road, (part of today's Monument Street), was laid out "from the land of Experience Ball" to the widow Abigail Blood's farm.

Structural evidence, however, including the gambrel roof--a roof type which did not become prevalent in the Concord area until the middle part of the eighteenth century--suggests that the house may even have been built or largely replaced by a later member of the Ball family--possibly **Caleb Ball, Jr.** (Ruth Wheeler's *Concord, Climate for Freedom* of 1967 refers to this farm near the river as having been bought by Caleb Ball in 1750--a reference which undoubtedly refers to Caleb Ball, Jr. [1724-1798] rather than Sr.)

More confusion, however, comes from Mrs. Wheeler's undated statement that when Experience Ball died in 1753 at the age of 63, the house and farm were inherited by her son (or grandson), **Reuben Ball**, who owned it for many years. Reuben Ball, son of Caleb and Experience's son, Benjamin, was not born until 1753. While the statement that Reuben's son, Nehemiah Ball (1791-1860), was born here in the house, is likely to be true, the only members of the Ball family listed on the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Census as owning farms or houses in Concord were Reuben's father, **Benjamin Ball**, and his venerable aunt, Lydia Ball (1716-1814). (Each of them owned a house and about fifty acres of land at that time; neither of them is listed as owning a barn). Deed research should be helpful in clearing up the chain of title from this period.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Concord "Old Ball House"
265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s) Form No.
228, 996, 1803, 1804

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Nehemiah Ball married Mary Meriam, sister of the wealthy Capt. Ephraim Meriam, and by the 1830s was living in the southeast part of the double-house at 57 Lexington Road (Form #310). While more research will be necessary to determine whether he ever owned the farm on Ball's Hill Road, either alone or with his brothers, it seems clear that by 1830 the property was owned by a Ball in-law **William Tarbell, Jr.** He had come to Concord from Pepperell, and married Reuben's sister, Lydia (b. 1767) in 1808. It was apparently her second marriage, as in 1786 she had married Thomas Hunt, who died ten years later. The federal interior renovations in the house would be consistent with an update around the time of Lydia and William's marriage.

Although maps from 1830 through 1856 show "W. Tarbell" as the owner, J. S. Keyes, writing in the 1880s, says that the house was occupied prior to 1850 by Daniel Tarbell. According to Keyes, Daniel Tarbell had two sons--Frederick, who lived nearby at 1266 Monument Street (#224), and Grosvenor, as well as a daughter who married Deacon Francis Hunt. He says that Mr. Hunt returned to Concord and lived in the house for several years after Daniel Tarbell's death. Deed research confirms that **Francis Hunt** bought the farm, which then covered 73 acres, from William Tarbell in 1873. Within a year, however, he sold it to a neighboring farmer, **William Holden**, owner of the old David Buttrick Farm on Monument Street, opposite the foot of Balls Hill Road. In 1876, Mr. Holden sold to **Danice Hancock**, who Keyes says "led a sort of hermit life there some years." Although Keyes says that Mr. Hancock sold the property to "an Englishman named Shaw," Mr. Hancock sold it to **Loervis E. Champney** in 1880, who resold it the next year to **Augustus Myers**. In 1884, the year that Keyes says it was bought by "a German confectioner from Boston," Mr. Myers sold the property, by then reduced to 30 acres, to **George Shaw**.

By 1886, the property had been acquired by **Joseph Middleby** of Chelsea (later owner of 761 Lowell Road), who sold it to the family who were to own it through the end of the twentieth century. Newlyweds **Christian** (1855-1929) and **Caroline (Sevrinson) (1858-1938) Benson** were two of the many Norwegian-born farmers who came to Concord in the two decades after the Civil War--a period when some of Concord's more prosperous farmers were actively seeking Scandinavian laborers, whom they considered to be productive workers. Like the Irish before them, several of the immigrants with farming skills eventually gathered enough money to buy farms in town of their own.

The Bensons eventually had nine children--eight girls and one boy. Two of them died as infants, but the other seven were raised in the tiny Balls Hill farmhouse. As adults, two Benson daughters, Matilda (b. 1887) and Clara (b. 1889), went into domestic service. Three others married, two of them to Norwegian-born brothers Ole and John Grindall. Over the early part of the twentieth century, the house was crowded with both Bensons and Grindalls. Christian and Caroline's only son, **C. Sanfred Benson** (1897-1987), gradually took over the operation of the farm, and eventually inherited the property. For most of his later life, he was a strawberry grower.

At the end of the twentieth century the farm was owned by Sanfred Benson's nephew, **Coburn Benson** (b. 1935). In 2001, Concord Town Meeting approved the purchase of the property, by then mostly grown up to woods, for the site of a new town well and a watershed protection area. The transaction included plans for the town to sell part of the property for development.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CON.228

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Concord "Old Ball House"
 265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s) Form No.
 228, 996, 1803, 1804

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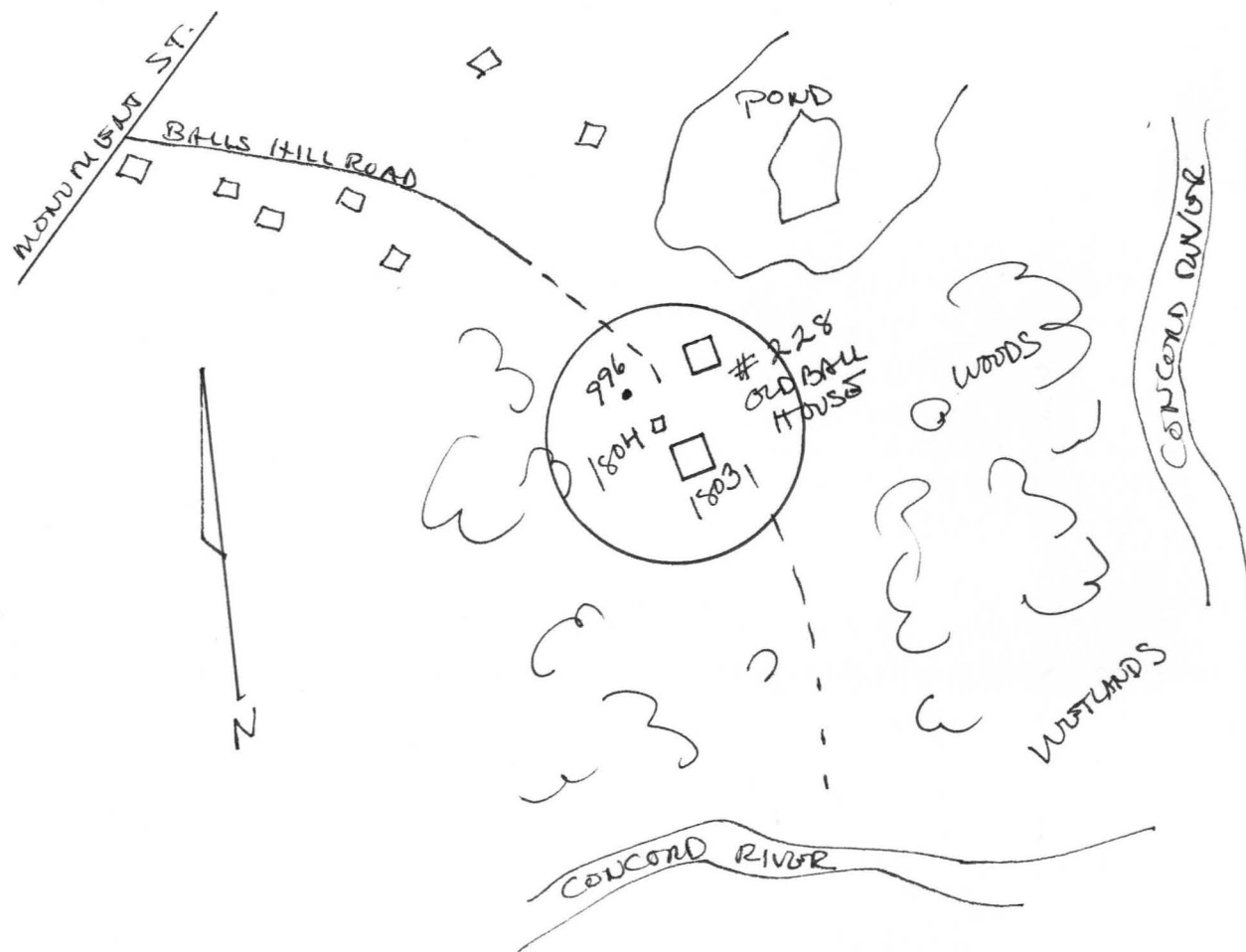
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Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community

Property Address

Concord

"Old Ball House"
265 Balls Hill Road

Area(s)

Form No(s).
228, 996, 1803, 1804

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible only in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Anne Forbes, Consultant, April 10, 2001
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

While most of the 27-acre property at 265 Balls Hill Road has grown up to woods since it ceased operation as a working farm in the twentieth century, the four remaining buildings and structures qualify for the National Register under Criteria A, C, and D at the local level as an intact farmstead which was in continuous agricultural use from at least the early part of the eighteenth century through the early twentieth.

The Old Ball House itself contributes to Criterion C as the sole surviving example in Concord of a 1 1/2-story gambrel-roofed dwelling of the eighteenth-century. It is also rare as a humble, simply-detailed vernacular colonial building which has not been significantly enlarged from the form it acquired by the early part of the nineteenth century. Although window sash was replaced and the original center chimney was removed ca. 1907, the major rooms retain a combination of eighteenth-century finish in such treatments as horizontal feather-edged sheathing in both wall paneling and batten doors, with fireplace surrounds, cabinetry, and moldings remaining from an update during the federal period.

The house has the potential to reveal important information about colonial building practices, and is thus likely to qualify under Criterion D. Recent building-archaeology test investigations, for instance, indicate that there are finish treatments such as early painted paneling and a succession of 18th and 19th-century wallpapers covered by early twentieth-century plaster which should provide a wealth of information when analyzed in the future. Visible portions of the structure, such as the tusk-tenoned beams of the first-floor frame, also suggest that some of the structure may date to the First Period, and that further investigation and analysis may provide significant information about how early Concord buildings evolved.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Community	Property
Concord	Old Ball House 265 Balls Hill Road
Area(s)	Form No. 228, 996, 1803, 1804

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement, cont.

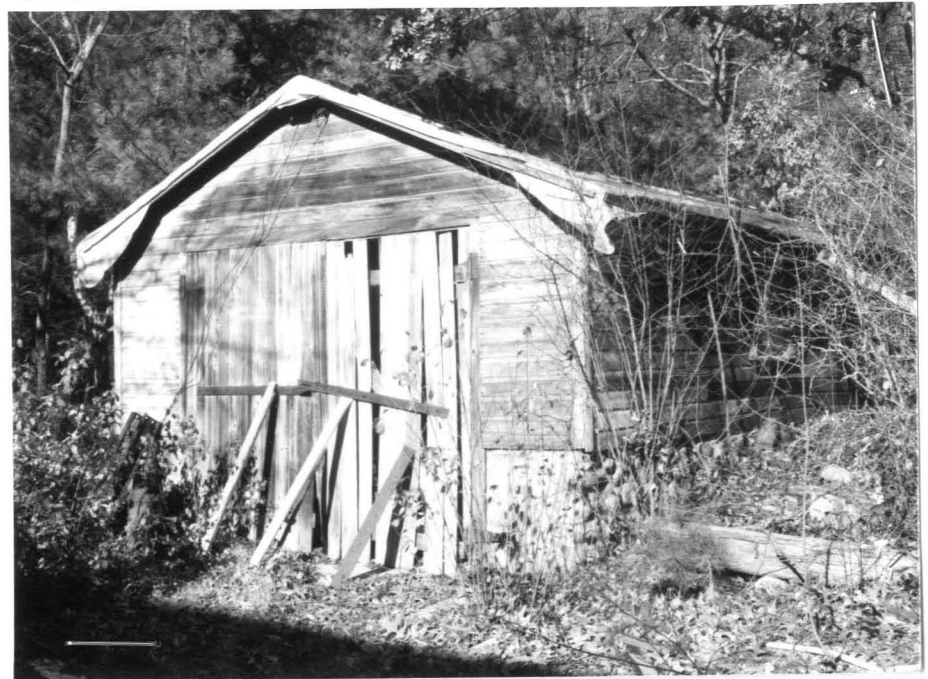
The English barn on the property (#1803), which appears to date to the eighteenth century, is also an extremely rare survival of an early agricultural building type, and thus meets Criterion C. It holds promise for providing information about the use of interior space in this less well-studied building type through future analysis of the high percentage of the structure which remains intact, thus also contributing to Criterion D.

The property meets Criterion A as the home and farmstead of several generations of the Ball family and their descendants, the Tarbells, who were both prolific and influential in Concord from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. While wealthier Balls lived in the town center, investigation into the history of this farming branch of the family should provide perspective which has been missing until the present time. Similarly, information about the Bensons, who owned the property for nearly 120 years beginning in the 1880s should shed light on farm life and agricultural practices in the northeast part of Concord in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sanford Benson's role as longtime gardener of renowned author and ornithologist William Brewster, who, in the words of John Hanson Mitchell, used the land around Benson's house as "his ornithological hunting ground," should add a further dimension to the property's significance under Criterion A.

Though overgrown, the farmstead still includes an early fieldstone root cellar, an early-twentieth-century garage, longtime wagon paths, and the foundations and remnants of numerous small outbuildings which contribute to its high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.



Main facade (CON.228)



Garage (CON. 1804)



West elevation (CON.228)



Barn, looking Southwest (CON.1803)



Barn, west elevation (CON.1803)



Cow stalls - barn lean to (CON.1803)



Barn interior, looking southeast (CON.1803)



Root cellar (CON.996)



Root cellar, interior (CON. 996)



West room: fireplace wall



Joint in front sill



East room: fireplace wall



Heanto: looking east

Concord:

OLD BALL HOUSE, #228
CON-228

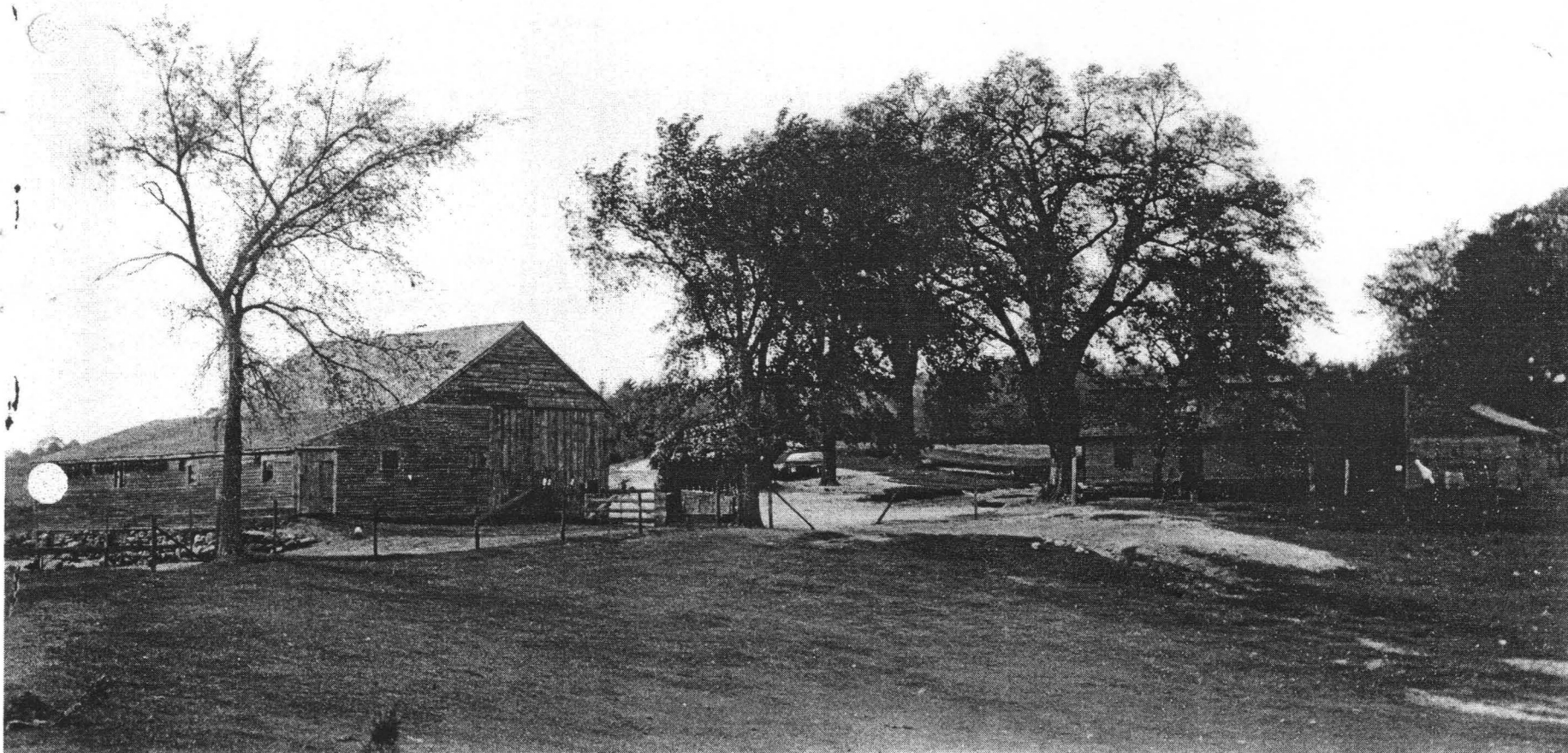


"Tarbell House May 21, 1904" Herbert W. Gleason / Concord Archives

CONCORD: OLD BALL HOUSE: CON. 228

**DARN: CON. 1803

CON. 228



"Tarbell House May 21, 1904"

Herbert W. Gleason

Concord Archives

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OLD BALL HOUSE, Concord

228

OLD TAYLOR HOUSE

3/29/18

CON-228

