

Architectural & Historical Report for 6 Elbow Lane Siasconset, Massachusetts

June 29, 2023

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, Elizabeth G. Grubbs.

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 6 Elbow Lane known as The Reef, 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 6 Elbow 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 1841 house at 6 Elbow Lane is significant as a vernacular mid-19th century structure. It has survived amidst a generous history of unknowns. The Aldridge, Morris, and Coleman families were all engaged in undocumented relocation, re-structuring and living in this house. If the oral tradition attributed to Edward F. Underhill in 1888 is true, this house exemplifies Nantucket's tradition of re-use by moving structures. Architectural details have survived that represent history earlier than and current with its 1841 re-structuring. The T-plan unique to the early boat's crew cottage, however, did not survive. Also known as a whale or fish house, and medieval hanging-loft house, its original function was to house a boat's crew.

3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

6 Elbow Lane: Valentine Aldridge (aka Aldrich) House, The Reef, 1841

Oral tradition collected by Edward F. Underhill in 1888, states that Ichabod Aldridge (1767–1854), rope-maker, moved two boat's crew cottages to Elbow Lane. One, belonging to Nathaniel Coffin (1739–1827), was originally on Front Street – where houses suffered severe damage during a fierce October 1841 storm. Aldridge removed the threatened or damaged house at that time and relocated it to a safer location on Elbow Lane. A second fish house, referred to as the most southerly house in 'Sconset once belonging to Eben Barnard (1747–1830) and subsequently to Stephen Coleman (1754–1835) and Gorham Coleman (1784–1855)—close to the South Gulley—was also relocated to the Aldridge property on Elbow Lane at the same time. How Aldridge utilized those two boat's crew cottages is not fully understood. No deed to Ichabod Aldridge for the land on Elbow Lane could be located and the date of 1753 that adorns the front of the house at 6 Elbow is unsubstantiated.

Ichabod Aldridge sold seven rods of land together with a dwelling house, outbuilding, and fish flakes to his son, Valentine (1803–97), a mariner, in 1843. (NRD Book 44/23) Valentine's maritime career is not documented, but in 1878 he was known as the oldest fisherman in 'Sconset. The *Inquirer and Mirror* notes that the octogenarian landed fifty-four cod in November 1883. (I&M 11/24/1883).

In 1856, Valentine Aldridge purchased land and a barn at what is now 2 Elbow Lane from Phebe Coleman, widow of Joseph G. Coleman (NRD Book 53/142-43). It appears that Valentine lived at 6 Elbow Lane with his wife Mary Worth (1808–96)), and daughter, Mary B. Aldridge (1832–1904), who married John C. Morris (b. 1822–1904) in 1852. A listing of "Ye Census at Siasconset on Ye Twentieth Day of Ye Eighth Month of 1890" includes Valentine Aldridge and wife along with John C. Morris and wife and Eugene Morris, the youngest of the five Morris children at The Reef—their name for the house at 6 Elbow Lane.

John C. Morris purchased the 2 Elbow lane property from Valentine in 1896 (NRD Book 79/393). Mary, the only child of Valentine and Mary inherited the property at 6 Elbow Lane when Valentine died intestate in 1897. Her heirs sold it to Robert B. Coffin (1831–1910) in 1906. The property Coffin purchased was a tract that included additional land on the west side of 6 Elbow that Aldridge purchased from heirs of Josiah Coleman in 1875. (NRD Book 64/8). The fact that Aldridge purchased property on either side of 6 Elbow from

brothers Joseph Gorham Coleman and Josiah Coleman suggests that 6 Elbow was also Coleman land before Aldridge acquired it.

Robert B. Coffin apparently spent his summers at his home at 22 Main Street, 'Sconset. He was also the owner of multiple 'Sconset properties that he rented to summer visitors. The Reef was undoubtedly part of his rental inventory. Among the many parcels of land his wife, and subsequently daughters, inherited at his demise was the Valentine Aldridge homestead, assessed at \$500 in the *Valuation and Tax List of Nantucket*, 1906. Coffin's daughter Mary J. C. Quinn sold her share in the property to her sister Ellen H. C. Burgess, who sold it to Clinton McCleave in 1918.

Clinton and Marion McCleave owned the property for more than thirty years. The *Inquirer and Mirror* noted that McCleave was making improvements to the property in 1918, and putting it "in excellent repair" in 1921, when the dwelling was assessed at \$960. Sanborn Insurance Company maps dated 1898, 1904, 1909, 1923 and 1949 show no change in the footprint of the dwelling, which is one and a half stories high, with a small one-story wart on the south end.

The estate of Marion McCleave sold the house to Albert Egan (1887–1970) in 1949. Egan, a contractor, built several 'Sconset houses. His activity and prominence in the village earned him the sobriquet of "Mayor of Siasconset". He and his wife, Frances, owned 6 Elbow Lane for ten years. They sold it to Mary Jane Asham in 1959 and the property changed hands several times in the 1960s, before being purchased by Spencer and Dorothy Cramer in 1968.

In 1973, the Cramers submitted an application to the HDC for an addition on Elbow Lane, as noted in the *Inquirer and Mirror*. Unfortunately, there was no follow-up report with details of the proposed addition. However, building department files include a site plan drawn for the Cramers in 1989 that indicates the addition. In 1981 the Cramers transferred the title to 6 Elbow Lane to their daughter and son-in-law, Dorothy and Frank Tolsdorf, retaining a life right in the estate. The Tolsdorfs returned the title to the Cramers in 1985. The property was then transferred to a trust in 1989, and Russell C. Cramer II, trustee, sold the Valentine Aldridge House to Alain Espourteille that year.

Beginning with Espourteille in 1989, a succession of changes were made to the rear, southern wing of the house. Working with Milton Rowland Associates, Espourteille executed an interior renovation of the rear portion of the house in 1989-90, with no demolition or change of footprint. In an article in the *Inquirer and Mirror* he shared that what started out as "a wallpaper and plaster job" ended up costing five times what he initially projected, and required bringing the house up to the current building code, a process he called "a nightmare." He sold the house to Walter and Sylvia Lukens in 1996. They worked with architect Christopher Holland to redesign the rear portion of the house, demolishing the area behind the living room and dining room of the historic house and building a new addition that included a kitchen, laundry room, bedroom, and bath on the first floor. Then in 2020, Sarah O'Reilly purchased the house from the Lukens and once again revisited the southern section of the house, adding an outdoor shower and fencing on the east side. McMullen & Associates were the architects of this small addition to the property.

The 'Sconset Trust acquired 6 Elbow Lane in 2023, in order to provide desperately needed rental housing for village workforce in Siasconset.

4. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

4.1 Description

This mid-19th-century dwelling has an original one-and-a-half stories with late 20th-century one-story additions to the rear or south. It has a central front door with 12/12 plank-framed windows on either side. The house has weathered cedar shingles, white-painted trim and a central brick chimney. There are 6/6 windows on the first floor and in the two gable ends. A shed dormer provides added height and natural light for the second floor bedrooms and bathroom. The roof has red cedar shingles.

The original northern portion of the house includes two rooms with fireplaces and a steep stair to two second floor bedrooms and one bathroom. Additions to the south include a first floor bathroom, kitchen, dining room with fireplace, laundry room, bedroom, bathroom, and several walk-in closets. An in-the-floor hatch

in the dining room has a stairway that leads to a full basement with a view to the northern crawl space. A pergola structure covers a Belgian granite block patio on the west side.

The east front room retains an early paneled fireplace mantelpiece that may be original. It consists of slender pilasters supporting a mantelshelf with a distinctive Greek Revival moulding. There are 19th-century doors in the front portion of the house, two sets of early 12/12/ sash and plank-framed windows. Many changes have removed most of the original material and details.

The house at 6 Elbow Lane has a distinct history from the earlier 18th-century village of Sconset. Its architecture is a simple combination of typical form and plan. So few details remain however, that it is not representative of any specific period. If the oral tradition from Underhill is correct, that this house was cobbled together from two different structures, then it represents the best of re-use and sustainability, above and beyond vernacular architectural style. The 12/12 window sash and plank-framed windows are typical for a period prior to 1841- prior to its being moved to this location. The plan of rooms does not replicate the 'Sconset village T-plan of the boat's crew cottage with additions to the north. The house is located to the south of the early village.

4.2 Alterations/Evolution

1841 Relocation of house parts: if Underhill's oral history is correct, two structures were brought together to become one new dwelling.

1881-1888 From a study of maps, it is documented that the first southern rear addition was in place.

1918 During the 30 years of McCleave family ownership, interior improvements are supported by increased tax assessment. During this time the footprint does not change.

1949-1995 Changes to the footprint occurred with additions to the south, with some demolition.

Footprint changes [see page 4] begin with the Espourteille ownership between 1989 and 1995 although plans were drawn up during Cramer's ownership. Mickey Rowland & Associates designed interior improvements installed by contractor Donald Miller. Drawings labeled 'Espourteille alterations' include the following: re-framing and rebuilding the main/front roof, repairs to existing foundation, a new foundation with crawl space at the rear, a new dormer on the south slope of the main roof, new second floor framing, insulation and heating added.

In 1997 there is a permit to demolish the rear portion of the house and rebuild what is in place in 2023. Plans were designed by Christopher F. Holland, AIA Architect for the Lukens family. A fireplace with a brick chimney was added in the dining room.

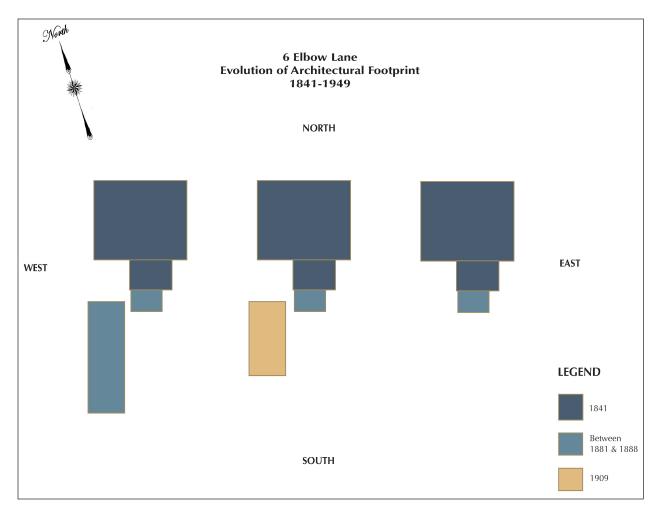
The 19th-century fireplace mantelpieces and doors in the east and west front rooms were stripped of original paint. Exposed floor joist framing in the ceiling and window and door trim in both rooms were added. This late 20th-century work done in the original front portion of the house has eliminated much of the original and early detail.

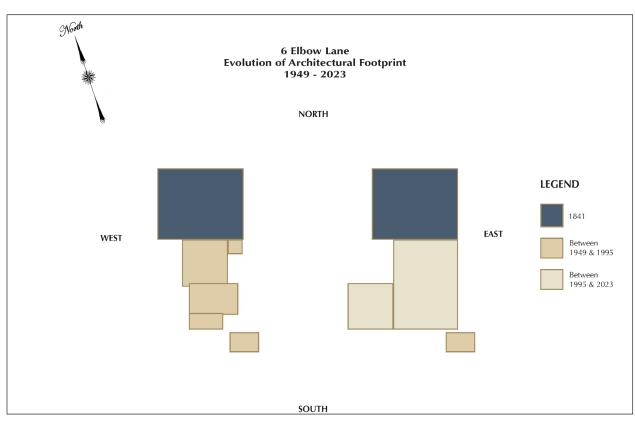
The sign board above the front door displaying '1753' is not accurate and should be replaced wth one that reads 'The Reef, 1841'.

4.3 Character-Defining Features

The character-defining features at 6 Elbow Lane include the following:

- · a mid-19th-century form and footprint;
- · early 12/12 window sash and plank-framed windows;
- 19th-century wood interior doors
- · Greek Revival fireplace in east front room.





4.4 Outbuildings

There are two outbuildings in the year 2023. One is a shed to the southwest of the main house that was built after 1949 that appears on a 1995 site plan. The second is a garage apartment to the west designed by Christopher F. Holland, AIA, that was built after 1995. The 1995 site plan shows a small shed to the southeast of the house that is believed to have been incorporated into the main house during its subsequent renovation.

The 1888 map shows a long outbuilding close to the southwest corner of the house which is in the same location on the 1909 Sanborn map but smaller. That outbuilding had been removed by 1923.

5. PROPERTY INFORMATION

- **5.1 Property Identification:** 6 Elbow Lane, Nantucket Assessor's Map: Parcel 73.2.4, lot 31 on .14 acres in the SOH/Sconset Old Historic District. The lot size of 8297 square feet shown on a 1989 site plan was reduced to 6366 square feet in 1995 when the property was subdivided.
- **5.2 Setting:** This house is located within the Old Historic District of Sconset. There is white-painted picket fencing, lawn and privet hedges. It is within a short walking distance to the ocean.

6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

6.1 Published and Archival Sources

Inquirer and Mirror;

1888, September 1: Underhill, E. F. "The Old Houses on 'Sconset Bank."

1890, August 21: "Ye Census of Siasconset."

1905, July 15: ad for sale of Valentine Aldridge house lately owned by Mary B. Morris

1918, October 19: McCleave making improvements on recently purchased property on Elbow Lane

1921, November 5: McCleave putting house in excellent repair

1973, September 20: HDC meeting notes, Cramer addition on Elbow Lane

1990, November 29: Phaneuf, Anne. "Historic Houses a Mixed Blessing for Some Owners"

May, Michael. 'Sconset House by House (Nantucket Preservation Trust, 2018)

Tyler, Betsy. 22 Main Street Siasconset (Nantucket Preservation Trust, 2007)

Valuation and Tax Lists, Town of Nantucket, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1916, 1921

6.2 Historical Maps & Plans

Walling, H.F. Siasconset detail from Map of Nantucket, 1858.

Stoner, J.J. Siasconset detail from Bird's-Eye View of the Town of Nantucket, 1881.

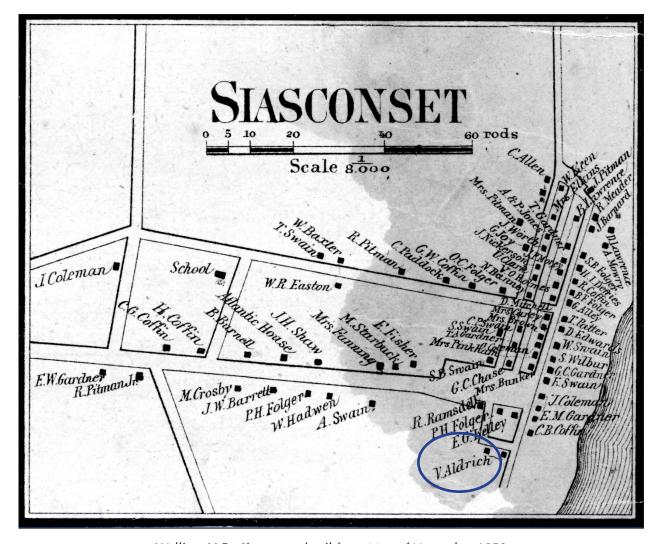
Platt, Harry. Map of the Village of Siasconset on the Island of Nantucket (New York: E.F. Underhill, 1888)

Sanborn Insurance Company maps: July 1898, sheet 14; October 1904, sheet 18; August 1909, sheet 20; October 1923, sheet 24; October 1949, sheet 24

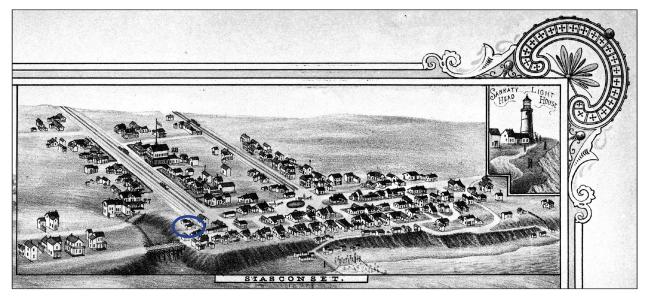
"Plan of Land in Siasconset, Massachusetts prepared for Spencer C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer," Hart Blackwell & Associates, 1989. Nantucket Registry of Deeds Plan Book 25, p. 22

Annotated "Plan of Land in Siasconset, Massachusetts prepared for Spencer C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer," (showing addition), 1989. Building Department file 73.34 31.

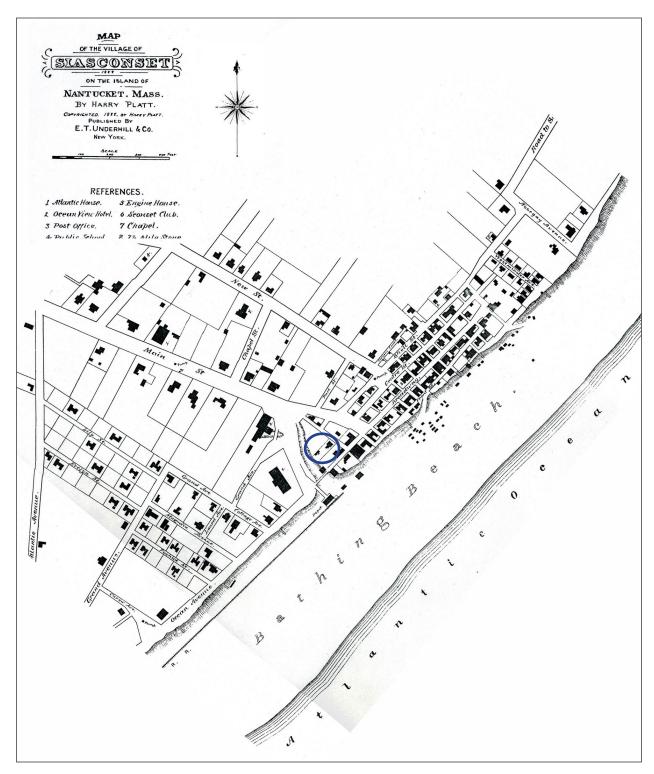
"Plan of Land in Nantucket, MA (Siasconset) prepared for Alain Espourteille," Chip Hart & Associates, 1995. Nantucket Registry of Deeds Plan 46Z.



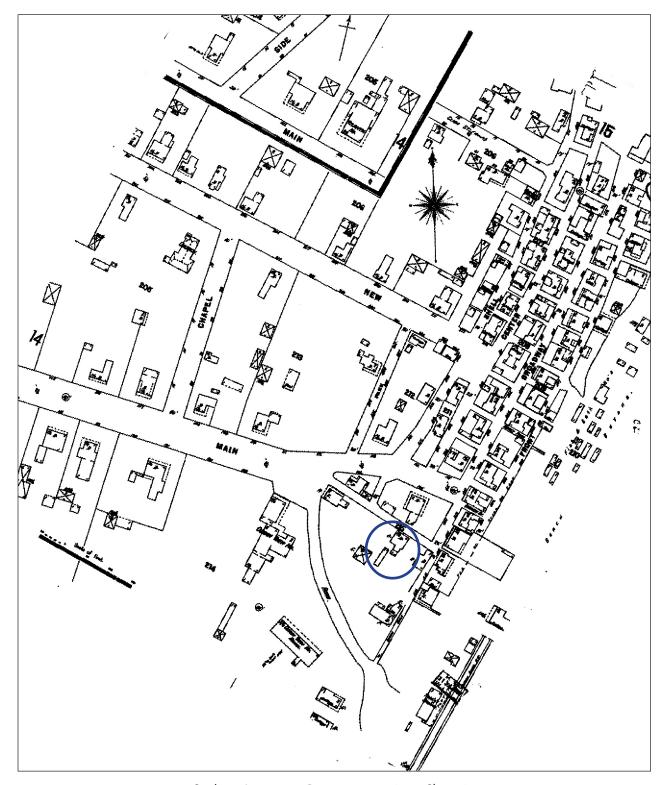
Walling, H.F. Siasconset detail from Map of Nantucket, 1858



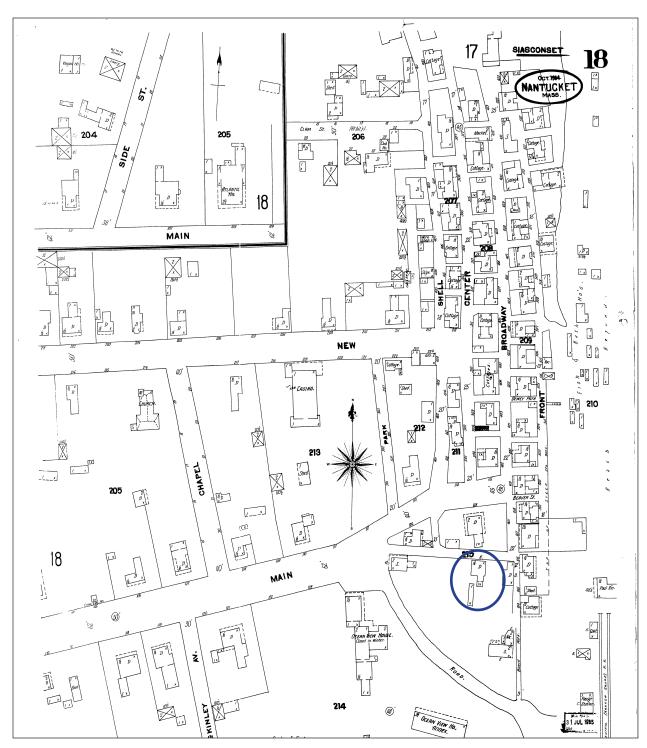
Stoner, J. J. Bird's Eye View of the Town of Nantucket Siasconset detail, 1881



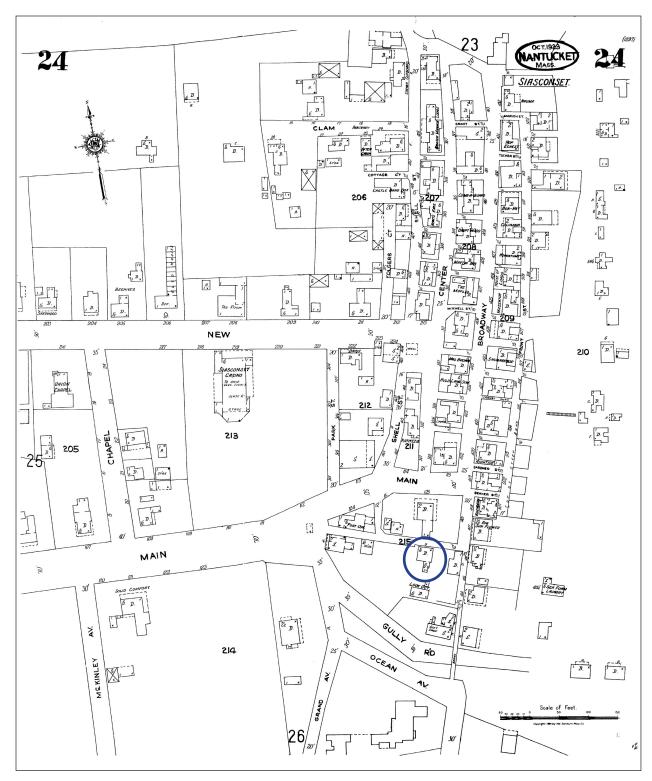
Platt, Harry, Map of the Village of Siasconset on the Island of Nantucket, Mass., Published by E. T. Underwood & Co., 1888



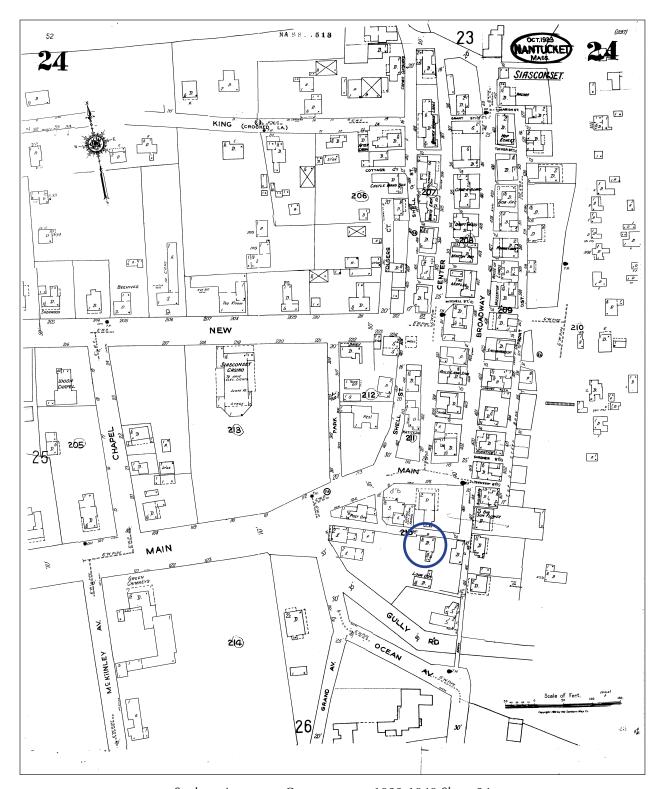
Sanborn Insurance Company map 1898 Sheet 14



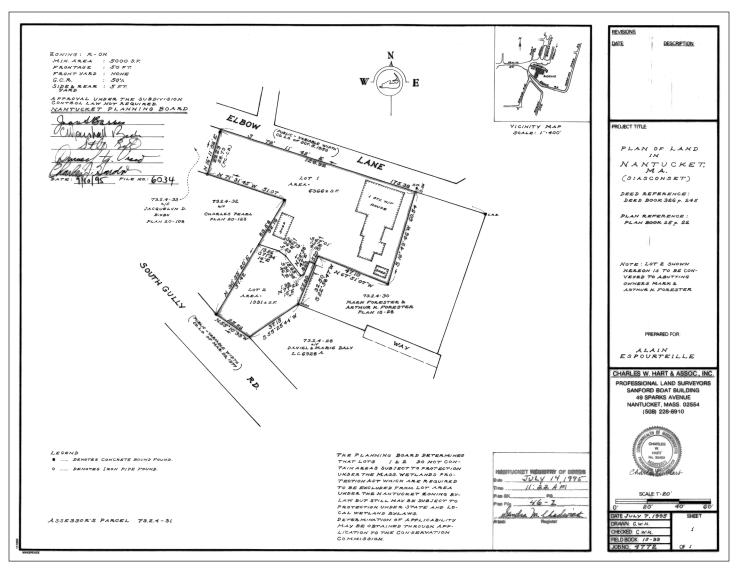
Sanborn Insurance Company map 1904 Sheet 18 [1909 map is the same as 1904 map]



Sanborn Insurance Company map 1923 Sheet 24



Sanborn Insurance Company map 1923-1949 Sheet 24



"Plan of Land in Nantucket, MA (Siasconset) prepared for Alain Espourteille," Chip Hart & Associates, 1995.

6.3 Historical Photograph

Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association:

sc612-71.jpg, Undated view of street front/north and west elevations



The street front/north and west elevations include the following details:

- · dark-colored trim paint
- 12/12 plank-framed window to the right of the front door
- · a single 2/2 window sash at the first floor west side
- · simple horizontal board fencing
- · a narrow plank-framed window in the west gable end
- · angled gutter from the front gutter to a specific destination perhaps for collection
- · the same front door that is in place currently

6.4 Year 2023 Photographs



North Street Elevation



West Elevation



West Elevation



East Elevation



South End of East Elevation



Front 12/12 Plank-Framed Window Sash



Strap Hinge, Front Door



Fireplace East Front Room



Fireplace East Front Room



Fireplace East Front Room



Moulding Detail: Fireplace East Front Room



West Front Room



West Front Room



West Front Room



Stair to Second Floor



Stair Landing Second Floor



Stair Landing Second Floor



Second Floor West Bedroom



Second Floor West Bedroom



Second Floor East Bedroom



Second Floor West Bedroom



Second Floor Bathroom



Second Floor Bathroom



View Down the Stair



First Floor Powder Room



Kitchen View to the Laundry Room



Kitchen



Dining Room Fireplace



Dining Room Floor Hatch to Basement



First Floor Bedroom



First Floor Bedroom



Walk-in Closet



First Floor Bathroom



First Floor Bathroom



Basement View to Early Stone Foundation



Shed



Garage Apartment

6.5 Chain of Title

(NRD = Nantucket Registry of Deeds)

1843 Aldridge to Aldridge

NRD Book 44, p. 23: Ichabod Aldridge, ropemaker, to son Valentine Aldridge, mariner, 1843

7 rods of land with the dwelling house, outbuildings and fish flakes thereon standing

North by a way

East by J. Gorham Coleman

South by the gulley

West by Josiah Coleman

1906 Aldridge to Coffin

NRD Book 87, p 277-78: heirs of Mary B. Aldridge to Robert B. Coffin, 1906

A certain tract of land with the dwelling-house and all other buildings thereon, situate in the village of Siasconset, known as the Valentine B. Aldrich [sic] homestead

Probate 1910: Robert B. Coffin, 1910: will dated December 7, 1901, all estate to wife, Adeline, after payment of \$100 to each of 3 daughters: Helen Burgess, Mary J. Coffin and Emily C. White

Probate: Adeline Coffin, 1916

1918 Quinn to Burgess

NRD Book 97, p. 333: Mary J. C. Quinn to Helen H. C. Burgess, 1918 All right, title and interest in the Valentine B. Aldridge homestead

1918 Burgess to McCleave

NRD Book 97, p. 474: Ellen H. C. Burgess to Clinton McCleave, 1918

Land in Siasconset and all buildings thereon, parcels one and two, conveyed to Burgess by Mary J. C. Quinn

Probate 2889: Marion A. McCleave, 1948. No known heirs

1949 McCleave to Egan

NRD Book 112, p. 390: estate of Marion A. McCleave to Albert F. Egan and Frances M. Egan, 1949

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon,

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1957 Egan to Ashman

NRD Book 117, p. 313: Albert F. Egan and Frances M. Egan to Mary Jane Ashman, 1957

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon,

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1962 Ashman to De Samsonow

NRD Book 123, p. 414: Mary Jane Ashman to Vassily De Samsonow, 1962

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon, and all furniture and furnishings

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1965 De Samsonow to Mumma

NRD Book 127, p. 474: Vassily De Samsonow to George E. Mumma, 1965

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon, and all furniture and furnishings

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1967 Mumma to Mumma

NRD Book 130, p. 555: George E. Mumma to George E. Mumma and Dorothy R. Mumma, 1967

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon,

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1968 Mumma to Cramer

NRD Book 132, p. 366: George E. Mumma and Dorothy R. Mumma to Spencer C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer, 1968

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon,

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1981 Cramer to Tolsdorf

NRD Book 185, p. 112: Spencer C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer to Frank F. Tolsdorf Jr. and Judith C. Tolsdorf, 1981

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon, reserving a life estate for the term of our natural lives

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1985 Tolsdorf to Cramer

NRD Book 231, p. 99: Frank F. Tolsdorf Jr. and Judith C. Tolsdorf to Spener C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer, 1985

The purpose of this deed is to return the fee title to the original Grantors (the Grantees here) which title was being held by the daughter and son-in-law for personal family reasons and without actual consideration

Land in Siasconset with dwelling and all buildings thereon,

Northerly by Elbow Lane

Easterly by Emily B. Robinson

Southerly by Robinson and Gully Road

Westerly by Esther Leveen

1987 Cramer to Trust

NRD Book 286, p. 181: Spencer C. Cramer and Dorothy P. Cramer to Trust for the benefit of Grantors Russell C. Cramer II and First Eastern Bank, N.A., 1987

The land in Siasconset, Nantucket County, Massachusetts, together with the dwelling house and all other buildings thereon, situate at 6 Elbow Lane.

1989 Cramer, trustee, to Espourteille

NRD Book 326, p. 244-45: Russell C. Cramer II, trustee, to Alain Espourteille, 1989

The land in Siasconset, Nantucket County, Massachusetts, together with the dwelling house and all other buildings thereon, situate at 6 Elbow Lane. Said property is more

particularly described as shown on a plan of Hart & Blackwell Associates, dated 2 June 1989 to be recorded herewith in PIBk25, Pg. 22.

1996 Espourteille to Lukens

NRD Book 519, p. 296: Alain Espouteille to Walter P. Lukens and Sylvia C. Lukens, 1996 A parcel of land together with improvements in the Town and County of Nantucket, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, known and numbered as 6 Elbow Lane, Siasconset. Said land is shown as Lot 1 on "Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts" by Charles W. Hart & Associates Inc. dated July 7, 1995 recorded in Plan File 46-Z of the Nantucket County Registry of Deeds.

2011 Lukens to Trust

NRD Book 1304, p. 306: Sylvia C. Lukens, widow, to Sylvia C. Lukens, trustee of Sylvia C. Lukens Revocable Trust, 2011

Lot 1 on "Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts" by Charles W. Hart & Associates Inc. dated July 7, 1995 recorded in Plan File 46-Z of the Nantucket County Registry of Deeds.

2020 Lukens Trust to Sara Shlosser O'Reilly Living Trust

NRD Book 1772, p. 65: Timothy M. Noble, Successor Trustee Sylvia C. Lukens Revocable Trust to Sara Shlosser O'Reilly and Christopher C. Wood, as Trustees of The Sara Shlosser O'Reilly Living Trust, 2020 Lot 1 on "Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts" by Charles W. Hart & Associates Inc. dated July 7, 1995 recorded in Plan File 46-Z of the Nantucket County Registry of Deeds.

2023 Sara Shlosser O'Reilly Living Trust to Village Keeper LLC

NRD Book 1928, p. 179–82: Sara Shlosser O'Reilly and Christopher Wood, Trustees of the Sara Shlosser O'Reilly Living Trust to Village Keepers LLC, 2023

Lot 1 on "Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts" by Charles W. Hart & Associates Inc. dated July 7, 1995 recorded in Plan File 46-Z of the Nantucket County Registry of Deeds.