

Elisha Rich House  
(Cappers House)  
Ryder Beach Road  
Truro  
Barnstable County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-710

HABS  
MASS,  
1-TRU,  
37-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ELISHA RICH HOUSE

HABS No. MA-710

Location: Ryder Beach Road 2¼ miles from Truro Center.  
Truro.  
Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

Present Owners: Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Cappers.

Present Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Cappers.

Present Use: Summer residence.

Significance: This is a Cape Cod "house and a half", four bay exterior, with one of the few bowed roofs in this area. It is located within the area of the proposed Cape Cod National Seashore.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Original and subsequent owners Mr. Silas Clark, Wellfleet, Mass. Attorney who resides near this house, and who has made a study of early Titles in this area, reports that 1831 is the date of the first deed. It conveyed property, without mentioning buildings, from Asa C. Paine to Elisha Rich. In 1841, a conveyance, probably a mortgage, mentioned a dwelling house. This was to the Truro Fire and Marine. Mr. Clark believes that Elisha Rich probably built the house.

Mr. Clark also reports that Rich's heirs deeded the property to E. H. Collins in 1883, thence to Sarah J. Manks in 1915 and to Dorothy Cappers in 1947. Title is in both parties at present time, Dorothy and E. O. Cappers.

In addition to having a good knowledge of the above transactions, Mr. Cappers also related a story that was told to him by Mrs. Manks of twin sisters telling her that their mother mentioned British soldiers coming by the house in the war. This could have been the Revolutionary War as well as the war of 1812 when British soldiers were in the vicinity, according to Mr. Cappers. When this story was told in 1915, the sisters were then 30 years old. Considering the date of 1783 for the Revolutionary War story, their mother would have been 52 when the sisters were born. This is possible.

Mr. Cappers said early deeds did not always mention buildings and his opinion is that the house dates from before the Revolutionary War.

Date of erection Late 18th or early 19th century.

Architect Unknown.

Builder Unknown.

Original plans None known to exist.

Alterations and additions Ell added to northwest corner of house in 1952 by present owner, includes kitchen, bathroom and bedroom with full basement. The two small rooms at the east end of the original kitchen were converted into one room, possibly in 1883.

Historical events connected with structure None discovered to date.

Important old views Present owner has some old photos of the house.

Sources of information Present owner; Mr. Silas Clark, Pamet Point Road, Wellfleet, Mass.

Likely sources not yet investigated A search of the Truro Town Records and the Barnstable County Records in Barnstable, Mass. could be made for further information on the date, builder, etc. The County records are incomplete prior to 1827 however because a fire in the Courthouse destroyed many of the early records.

Prepared by Charles S. Dotts  
Charles S. Dotts, Architect  
HABS Cape Cod Survey I  
July 12, 1960

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### GENERAL STATEMENT

Interest and merit This is a Cape Cod "house and a half" (four bay), one and a half story, frame construction, located within the area of the proposed Cape Cod National Seashore. It is one of the few houses discovered so far with a bowed roof.

Condition of fabric. Good.

### THE EXTERIOR

Overall dimensions Original house: 26'-3" x 27'-10".

Foundations Wood sills on brick foundation. Owner reports that corners of house rest on brick piers, with a brick pier in the center of each wall. Single bricks fill the space between the piers.

Wall construction Vertical plank frame construction. Suds (2 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 4) are noted in end walls, spaced 3'-0" on center, and covered with horizontal boards. Pinned mortise and tenon joints, in frame. Exterior walls are shingle covered, but originally south exterior had clapboards, (prior to 1957). Exposure, 6" to weather.

Porches, stoops Stone step at main door on south.

Chimneys Two, one over center of house, and one over new addition. These are of brick, and the old chimney as been rebuilt by present owner.

Openings - doorways and doors 6 panel wood door, 5 light transom at south entrance.

windows and shutters 9/6 double hung wood sash, not old.  
6/6 lights on second floor. Wood shutters.

Roof - shape, covering, construction Fitched, gabled roof, with bow noted at gable ends, wood truss construction, 3 to 4" x 7", placed 4'-6" to 5'-9" on center. Single covering. Maximum bow at gable end was found to be 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

cornice, eaves Wood, box cornice, dentils on south or main side of house.

dormers None.

## THE INTERIOR

Floor plans The first floor follows the general plan of the Cape Cod "house and a half" with a main door on the south flanked by a two window room on the east and a one window room on the west. The door leads into an entry with a small closet at the rear which could have been the location of the stairs to the second floor, however there is no visible evidence of this. Directly to the north of this west front room is a small hall with the stairs to second floor running off of it, to the east. There is visible evidence of an old exterior doorway leading off this hall to the west. A window is now located there.

The north part of the first floor was probably a kitchen, and is now a living room. The typical Cape Cod house had the buttry and the small bedroom at the east of the kitchen, but these partitions have been removed and this area is now one large room.

There are two bedrooms on the second floor. A modern ell was added to the northwest part of the house by the present owner in 1952. This includes a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, with basement.

Stairways One, of wood, steep and narrow, from first to second floor.

Flooring Random width pine boards, 5" to 15" wide.

Wall and ceiling finish Mostly plastered walls with plastered ceilings. East and west front rooms have wood wainscot to height of window stool.

Doorways and doors 6 Panel wood doors, first floor and 4 panel doors second floor.

Trim Probably original mitered door and window trim. Original fireplace paneling in east front room. This has wood mantel and 12 light china cupboard at the south of the fireplace.

Hardware Mostly modern.

Lighting Electric.

Heating Fireplaces in east room and original kitchen. The latter has been rebuilt and "Heatilator" installed. Forced hot air furnace under new ell, serving this ell and original kitchen.

#### SITE

Orientation House faces south on terraced hill in pleasant setting.

Enclosures None.

Outbuildings Fairly new garage about 20 yards to northeast of house.

Walks, driveways Stone and concrete walk in front of house. Blacktop driveway from road leads to parking lot east of house.

Landscaping Terraced front lawn with trees, shrubbery and lawn in good condition. Informal planting.

Prepared by

Charles S. Dotts  
Charles S. Dotts, Architect  
HABS Cape Cod Survey I  
July 12, 1960

#### References

Measured Drawings by Cape Cod Survey I, Eastham Field Office, Summer 1960.