

Proctor House
Ipswich, Massachusetts
Essex

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HABS No. MASS-322

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13.

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Massachusetts

Historic American Buildings Survey
Frank Chouteau Brown, District Officer
76 Chestnut Street, Boston, Mass.

ADDENDUM TO
PROCTOR HOUSE
Jeffrey's Neck Road (moved from South Main Street, abutting Choate Bridge)
Ipswich
Essex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-322

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
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Washington D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to:
PROCTOR HOUSE

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HABS No. MA-322

Location: Jeffrey's Neck Road, Ipswich, Essex County, Massachusetts.

Significance: Now part of the Ross Tavern site, the Proctor House represents early New England architectural expression. Historian Abbott Lowell Cummings cites "the cyma molded overhanging girt, the crease molded coverboard, the crease molded dentils, and red paint as signposts of a distinctly elegant, regional school of seventeenth-century architecture."

Description: The Proctor House is a frame structure, rising two and one-half stories in height, dating to the 1680s. Facing south, the Proctor House presents a five bay front. Its side facades are two bays deep, though in plan, it is only a single pile structure. The windows are six-over-nine double hung sash. The gable roof allows for an attic level window in the east and west ends. The structure has one chimney, set east of center in plan. The exterior fabric is clapboard.

History: Amateur architectural historian Daniel S. Wendell believed the Proctor House began as a single cell, frame structure, that was enlarged in 1734-36. At the same time, the Proctor House was enlarged, it was moved to a site abutting Choate Bridge. The oldest portions of the structure are the chimney bay and the cell to the left of it.

Wendell restored the Proctor House, based on physical evidence described by Abbott Lowell Cummings. Wendell and Cummings pointed to the mortises on the outer face of the framing as evidence for a two story entrance porch; Wendell restored the porch after 1940. Moreover, Wendell and Cummings saw molded verge boards and embellished overhangs on the gables. In the oldest part of the house, three cyma molded, overhanging girts supported by brackets at the corners were discovered. Paint and nail evidence suggested to Wendell and Cummings that square blocks with incised patera-like designs appeared every two feet or so in dentil course. Wendell and Cummings believed the fenestration initially consisted of lead casement, three part windows on first and second floors. The entrance was a simply framed door. Especially remarkable were the Proctor House framing structures, such as the T-shaped summer beams and the two sets of joists at right angles supporting the overhanging girts. The summer beams had flat chamfers and lamb's tongue stops at outer walls and where they joined one another. Posts with bevel molded heads supported the summer beams. There was also shadow-molded sheathing on the fireplace wall.

The house became known as the Ross Tavern in the nineteenth century; though it is unclear if that name includes the Collins-Lord House that appears as an (27'0" x 18'0") ell behind the Proctor House on the present site on Jeffrey's Neck Road. Wendell added a kitchen wing to the conglomeration known as the Ross Tavern in 1940; at that time, he also added pilasters to the central chimney.

Sources: Historic Buildings of Massachusetts, edited by John C. Poppeliers. Scribner Historic Building Series. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976. Photographic catalogue of historic buildings, built primarily during the colonial and federal periods.