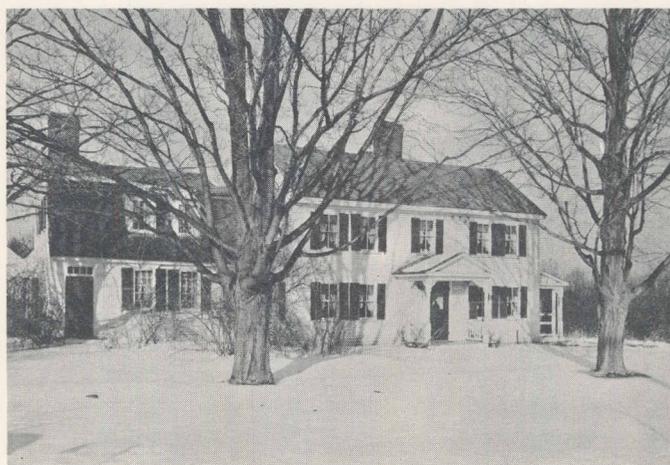


Samuel Hartwell House and Ephraim Hartwell Tavern

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
Historic Structures Report, Part I
Historical Data Section

by
John Luzader



DIVISION OF HISTORY
Office Of Archeology And Historic Preservation

September 9, 1968

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

HARTWELL HOUSES
HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT PART I
HISTORICAL DATA SECTION
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present a history of the Hartwell houses at Minute Man National Historial Park. It combines an account of both the Hartwell Tavern, for which an Administrative Data Section has been prepared by Superintendent Benjamin Zerbey, and the Samuel Hartwell House that was burned in February 1968. The reason for this joint treatment is that the history of the two houses is so closely related that a separate study did not seem justified. The RSP number for the Hartwell Tavern is M-H-21. No RSP number has been assigned to the Samuel Hartwell House.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

FOR THE

EPHRAIM HARTWELL TAVERN

PART I, ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SECTION

3. Administrative Data

- a. Ephraim Hartwell Tavern - Building Number 23.
- b. The building is proposed for public use. It will be furnished as an historic house museum with one room designated as an interpretive facility.
- c. Master Plan Drawing Number NHP-MM-3002B, Sheets 1 and 2, list the Hartwell Tavern as an historic house museum. The building will function as the primary manned interpretive point for the mid-portion of the Battle Road Unit of the park.
- d. The structure will be operated by park personnel. Portions of it will be manned while other portions will be unmanned. Maintenance and operating funds will derive from the Minute Man Buildings and Utilities appropriation.
- e. No cooperative agreements exist for furnishing or operating this structure.
- f. Work will commence on the preparation of the Historic Data Section of this project. This will be followed by the Architectural investigation of the building from which will result a complete set of plans and specifications for the proposed restoration.

g. It is difficult to estimate what the restoration of this building will cost. Following preparation of the Architectural Data Section of the Historic Structures Report, a more reliable figure will be advanced.

An amount of \$1,400 is proposed in Project Construction Proposal B-18 which will cover the Historical investigation. The amount for Architectural investigation in preparation of that section of the Historic Structures Report will have to be estimated by the Branch of Preservation.

Benjamin J. Zerbey
Superintendent
April 1968

Minute Man NHP

CHAPTER I

The History of the Samuel Hartwell House

The Hartwell family in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, descended from William Hartwell, who settled on the Mill Brook in Concord at an unknown date.¹ William and his wife, Jasan, were the parents of three children; John, born in 1640; Samuel, born 1645; and Marthe, born in 1649. It is with the descendants of Samuel that this study is concerned.

Samuel, whom we shall call Samuel, Senior, was born in 1645, married Ruth Wheeler in 1665, and died in 1725. The eldest of their eleven children was Samuel, Junior, who was born in 1666. In 1692 Samuel, Jr., married Abegail Stearnes, who died in 1709. His second wife was Experience, about whose surname, birthdate, marriage date, and death the records are silent. All of his seven children were issue of his first marriage.²

Sometime prior to 1692, Samuel acquired land along the road variously termed the "Country Road", "County Road", and "Bay Road," and which today is called "Battle Road" in the part of east Concord

1. Middlesex County [Mass.] Probate No. 10598, William Hartwell, 1690; Concord Town Records, 1635 - 1789, 21.

2. Middlesex County Probate No. 10587, Samuel Hartwell, 1744, item no. 1, Will.

that was eventually incorporated into the Town of Lincoln. In his will, dated February 20, 1732/3, he disposed of his home in the following terms: "I give unto my Beloved wife Experience Hartwell the Improvement on one half of my lands both as to quantity and quality during the time of her remaining my widow - as also the improvement [use] of the easterly part of my Dwelling house and one half part of the barn during said time...."³ The ownership of the dwelling was bequeathed to his son, Ephraim, who also received all of his father's Concord real estate when the latter died in 1744. The inventory of the estate had this to say about Samuel's house lot and dwelling: "One Dwelling House and one Barn - - - A House Lot containing about thirty and two acres of Land it being orcharding [sic.] pasture and mowing land and is bounded Southerly on the Road Easterly on Nat^{el} Whittemore Northerly on him sd [said] Ephraim Hartwell & Westerly on Way leading to Bedford and on him sd Ephraim Hartwell."⁴ Samuel left other, adjoining real estate in Concord, as well as four acres in the Town of Bedford. His personal property was appraised at - 493 - 2s - 4d., a substantial estate for an 18th century yeoman. Samuel, Jr., had not inherited the plot in eastern Concord from his father, who died in 1725 without property in that part of the town. In fact, no deed exists recording his acquisition. However, there are some late 17th century deeds that place Samuel Hartwell, Jr., on the Bay Road. One, by which Francis Fletcher sold twenty-six acres of upland to Benjamin Whittemore on October 10, 1693, identified

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., Inventory, February 20, 1744/5.

Samuel as an abutter.⁵ Another, dated March 16, 1692, by which Moses Whitney sold a fifteen-acre parcel to Benjamin Whittemore, named Samuel as the southeast abutter.⁶ Thus, although the records are silent concerning how or when Samuel obtained the property on the Bay Road, it is clear that he owned at least a part of his thirty-two acre house lot in 1693. The earliest reference to his house was found in a 1716 road description.⁷ The fact that Samuel married in 1692 and that his seven children were born between the years 1693 and 1709 suggests that he may have had a dwelling on the location before the end of the 17th century.

As has been noted, Samuel died in 1744 and willed his lot, with the house and barn, to his youngest son, Ephraim, reserving a portion of their use to his widow as part of her dower. Ephraim already owned other property, including an eighteen-acre lot that he received by a deed of gift from his father in 1733.⁸ He retained ownership of both houses until his death in 1793, but by 1775 the old Samuel Hartwell house was occupied by his son, Samuel III, who at the time of the Lexington-Concord Battle was a "Sargeant" in Captain William Smith's Company of Lincoln Minutemen. Hence, it came to be identified as the Sargeant Samuel Hartwell House.

5. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 10: 370 - 1.

6. Ibid., Book 10: 371 - 2.

7. Concord Town Records, 1635 - 1789, Settlement of Lines of Highway, 1716, from Ensign Jones to the Lexington Line.

8. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 35: 187 - 8.

The record of occupancy of Samuel Hartwell's house during the twenty years following his death is unclear. On first thought, it is logical to assume that the widow, Experience, occupied at least the eastern portion and half of the barn and land reserved to her use by Samuel's will. However, a deed by which Ephraim Hartwell obtained title to a house and land in 1750 raises questions concerning the Hartwell lands on the Bay Road.

John Brown, a Concord blacksmith, sold Ephraim two pieces of land in east Concord. One contained six acres, 310 1/2 rods with a dwelling house and was bounded southwest by the Bay Road, southeast and northeast by Nathaniel Whittemore, and west and northwest by Ephraim Hartwell. The second contained three acres, 100 rods and was bounded on the southwest by Whittemore, west by Ephraim, and northwest by the road.⁹ The description of the larger lot placed it between Whittemore's homestead and the lot that Ephraim inherited from his father in 1744. This means that the parcel was adjacent to or on the Hartwell house lot described in the Samuel Hartwell inventory of real estate.¹⁰ There is no record that reflects when or from whom Brown acquired this house and lot.

On the face of it, the Brown deed brought Ephraim another house, making a total of three, to wit: (1) the house that he received by

9. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 52: 457 - 8.

10. See footnote 4 above.

deed of gift from his father in 1733; (2) the Samuel Hartwell House that he inherited in 1744; (3) the house purchased from John Brown. The only recorded dispositions of houses by Ephraim were the two included in his will, and those were the house received by the deed of gift and the one inherited from Samuel.

The Brown - Hartwell deed thus poses two problems: (1) From whom did Brown obtain the house and land on the Bay Road? (2) What did Ephraim Hartwell do with the house he acquired from Brown? Three solutions suggest themselves: (1) Brown had owned the house contemporaneously with Samuel Hartwell; (2) he bought the land from Nathaniel Whittemore, along with the house, or erected a house on it between 1744 and 1750; (3) that Ephraim by an unrecorded deed sold Brown his father's house with a parcel of land after Samuel, Jr.'s death in 1744. The first solution breaks down because Brown is not identified as an abutter in any of the earlier Whittemore and Hartwell deeds or probates. Concord tax lists show that he did not own land there prior to 1750. The lists are arranged geographically, and they place John Brown in another part of east Concord in 1731 and in the northern part of the town in 1741.¹¹ The second solution might explain how Brown got the property, but does not tell what Ephraim did with this, his third, house after 1750. Another objection to this solution is that there is no record of a diminution of Whittemore holdings

11. Concord Tax Lists, 1731, 1741.

in this area. The third solution has an air of plausibility. Ephraim's son was only two years old when Samuel, Jr., died. Having no need for two dwellings, Ephraim may have sold his father's house to Brown. If he did, why would he buy it back in 1750, when he still had no apparent immediate need for it? Another factor is that Experience had a dower right in the house and land. However, since there is no recorded deed reflecting this transaction, it is possible that she was a party to a post-1744 sale to Brown. No record has survived that indicated where the widow lived, although she may have resided in the Samuel Hartwell House during a part of the time prior to 1764, when she last appeared on a Lincoln tax record.¹²

Just when Sargeant Samuel Hartwell moved into his grandfather's old house is impossible to determine. His father, Ephraim, wrote his will in 1786 and died in 1793, leaving Samuel "Eleven acres & Seventeen rods more or less, with the House thereon where he now Dwells and the other buildings belonging (part of which I have already given him by Deed of Gift) Bounded westerly & northerly on my other lands from the Highway by the Orchard wall to the westerly end of a pair of barrs [sic.], thence running northeasterly Eighteen rods to a [n] apple tree with stones round it, thence more East Six rods to a stake by a spring of water, thence more north a few rods

12. Lincoln Tax Record, 1764.

to a large rock, and thence East as the wall stands to land of William Smith's wife. - " ¹³ It is clear from this description that this parcel was part of the thirty-two acre house lot delineated in the 1744 probate of Samuel Hartwell, Junior's estate.¹⁴ The Lincoln tax records for 1764 indicated that the younger Samuel, then twenty-two years old, was living apart from his parents, probably in the Samuel Hartwell House. In that year he was assessed for one poll, £ 22 for real estate, and £ 7 for personal property, consisting of a horse, two oxen, and a cow.¹⁵ Since he did not buy or inherit any real property prior to 1764 to account for the £ 22 real estate assessment, Samuel must have received the deed of gift referred to in his father's will before that year. The 1769 tax record (the next available one) listed Samuel in the proper geographic sequence, again assessed him £ 22 for real estate, and identified him as a clockmaker.¹⁶ In brief, the tax records establish Samuel III's residence in the old Hartwell House and his position as a self-supporting, tax-paying member of the community during at least the second half of the 1760's.

13. Middlesex County Probate No. 10560, Ephraim Hartwell, 1793, item no. 1, Will, Jan.25, 1786.

14. See footnote 4 above.

15. Lincoln Tax Record, 1764.

16. Ibid., 1769.

Samuel III married Mary Flint on September 12, 1769, and their first child, Polly, was born November 13, 1770.¹⁷ The couple lived in the old homestead throughout their married life, with Samuel receiving final title to the property at his father's death in 1786. They were living there on April 19, 1775, when the British force marched from Boston to Concord, opening the military phase of the American Revolution. Since Samuel's will reserved the western third of the house for his wife's use, she probably continued to live in it after his death in 1829 at the age of eighty-seven. Mary Flint Hartwell died in 1846 at the age of ninety-eight, and her memories of the exciting days of April 1775 were the source for stories of the house that are studied in another chapter of this report.

From 1929 until February 18, 1968, the house was used as a restaurant called "The Hartwell Farm Inn." On the night of February 18, 1968, the house burned, leaving only the massive central chimney and portions of the walls standing, and another historic landmark of the Battle Road was lost.

17. Lincoln Vital Records, 115; 44.

CHAPTER II

The History of the Hartwell Tavern

On January 14, 1707, Samuel Hartwell, Junior's wife, Abigail, gave birth to her sixth child and fourth son. Like most of the Hartwells and in common with many New England children, the boy received an Old Testament name - Ephraim. His brothers were Samuel, Joseph, and Isaac; and his sisters were Abigail, Mary, and Lydia.¹ When Ephraim was two years old his mother died.² His father married for his second wife a woman with the old Puritan name, Experience.³

The Hartwells were prosperous folk, and when Ephraim was a young married man of twenty-two his father, through a deed of gift, gave him pieces of real estate in Bedford and east Concord, including eighteen acres and a new house in that part of Concord that was later incorporated into the Town of Lincoln.⁴ Thrifty, industrious Yankee

1. Middlesex County Probate No. 10587, Samuel Hartwell, 1744, item no. 1, Will, Feb. 20, 1732/3.

2. "Hartwell Genealogy," Minuteman National Historical Park files.

3. Supra., 1.

4. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 35: 187 - 8.

that he was, Ephraim enlarged his land holdings until by 1786 he owned approximately 186 acres, and over the years he was identified as a cordwainer (shoe-maker) and "yeoman" until 1754, when he was designated a "gentleman."⁵ In 1756 the Court of General Sessions for Middlesex County granted him an inn-keeper's license, and he probably kept an inn in 1775, but the Court's Record does not list licensees after 1772.⁶ In 1774, the year before the Revolution began, Ephraim was assessed £ 71 for real estate and £ 37 for personal property, the highest rate among his Lincoln neighbors, but not so high as that of some of his neighbors on the Concord side of the town line.⁷

Ephraim's public career was moderately active. Like his neighbors and kinsmen, he served in the County's militia, gaining the rank of Cornet, a title that he continued to employ throughout the remainder of his life.⁸ Too old for active service when the war broke out, Ephraim occupied the position of "Sealer of leather" among the town officers of Lincoln.⁹

5. Ibid., 39: 160 , 161; 52: 457-8; 66: 182-3; Middlesex County Probate No. 10560, Ephraim Hartwell, item no. 1, Will, January 25, 1786.

6. Middlesex County, Records of the Court of General Sessions, 1756 - 1772.

7. Lincoln Tax List, 1774.

8. Lincoln Vital Records, 164. Ephraim's gravestone in the Old Cemetery, Lincoln, identifies him as Cornet Ephraim Hartwell.

9. Lincoln Town Records, Book 171.

Shortly before Ephraim's father gave him the new house on the Bay Road, the young man married Elizabeth Heywood. By 1740 five children were born to them. Like many families in that time of high infant mortality, tragedy struck the Hartwells, and between October 5 and 27, 1740, all of their children died of "throat distemper."¹⁰ During the next twelve years eight more children were born, including Samuel, who received his grandfather's old house, and John, who lived with his parents and inherited Ephraim's home.¹¹

When Ephraim was seventy-nine years old he made his will. Although he signed it with his mark, his wealth and social position apparently entitled him to the use of the term, "gentlemen," as it had for more than thirty years. He provided for his wife of fifty-four years in the following language:

I give unto Elizabeth Hartwell my Beloved Wife the use and Imprövement of one third part of my Dwelling House & Cellers [sic.] under the Same, which part She shall choose, with the priviledge of the well, House-yard &c During her natural life. And I give unto my said wife my Negro woman, named Violet for her own Service & Disposal. I also give my sd [said] wife the use of all my household goods (excepting Barrels and one good Feather bed) During life; I also give her annually During life Twelve bushels of Indian meal, Six bushels of Rye meal, one bushel & an half of Malt, half a bushel of white beans, two hundred pounds of pork. Eighty pounds of Beef, Two barrels of Cyder [sic.], with barrels to keep

10. "Hartwell Genealogy." Minute Man National Historical Park files.

11. Ibid.,

it in, Six bushels of winter apples, and all other Source necessary for her, and Ten cords of Wood at her House cut fit for her use. Two good milch cows well kept for her Summer & Winter, and a horse to ride as she may have occasion; and also Five pounds Lawful Silver money annually, if called for. - 12

To his son, John, who made his home with his parents and cared for them in their old age, he gave:

My Dwelling House in Lincoln and the new addition adjoining in which I now Dwell (Reserving liberty for my wifes Improvement as aforesaid) and all my other buildings thereunto belonging and all my lands in Lincoln, Every part & parcel thereof . . . , excepting what I have given to my son Samuel as afore said, and bounding thereon as before described.¹³

Ephraim's phraseology in connection with the house throws important light on its construction history. The house consists of three parts: a two-story portion, a smaller one-story and attic, gambrel-roofed appendage, and a kitchen shed. Traditionally, the gambrel-roofed portion is the oldest. However, the wording: ". . . , and the new addition adjoining in which I now Dwell," indicates that it was a recently built feature, probably added to provide a home for the aged Ephraim and Elizabeth. The inventory of Ephraim's personal property supports this. That document locates the household furnishings in three rooms: front room, front chamber, and kitchen, which suggests that Ephraim was living in only a portion

12. Middlesex County Probate, 10560, Ephraim Hartwell, item no. 1, Will, January 25, 1786.

13. Ibid.

of the house at the time of his death. Such an arrangement fits the household picture very nicely. John married Hepzibah Brooks on December 18, 1783. Their first child, Lydia, was born in 1785, and by 1793 four more children had been born. By the close of the ninth decade of the 18th century, probably earlier, John had taken over the management of his father's property, and as his family grew, its needs dictated his occupying the main block of the house, with an addition erected to accommodate his parents, who no longer required a larger residence. A detailed study of the house's fabric will shed additional light on the subject, hopefully confirming or correcting this interpretation.

John Hartwell thus inherited the Ephraim Hartwell Tavern, and the property that he owned along the Battle Road came to be referred to as the Deacon John Hartwell Farm. By virtue of his militia service, John was frequently termed Lieutenant or Captain, as well as Deacon. He lived in the old house until his death in 1820, when the estate passed to his widow and four children.¹⁴ Sarah, one of his daughters, married Abijah H. Pierce, who eventually bought up all of the other heirs' interest in the homestead.¹⁵

14. John died intestate, and no probate action is a matter of record.

15. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 382: 323; 324; 387: 398-9; 465: 5-6; 732: 517-8.

CHAPTER III

The Hartwell Houses on April 19, 1775

Besides being two interesting and picturesque old houses, the Hartwell Houses **were components of the historic setting of the drama** that was acted out along the Battle Road on April 18 and 19, 1775. The older one was the home of Samuel Hartwell, his wife Mary, and their three small daughters: Polly, born November 13, 1770; Sally, born January 25, 1773; and Lucy, born November 15, 1774.¹ Samuel was a clocksmith and a sergeant in Captain William Smith's Company of Lincoln Minutemen.

The tavern's occupants included its owner, Ephraim, his wife Elizabeth, their son John, and a slave named Violet. Ephraim, who was sixty-eight years old, was no longer liable for military service, but John, like his brother Samuel, was a sergeant in the Minute Company.²

Since the houses were standing near the old Bay Road during the two historic days of April, they were part of the physical en-

1. Lincoln Vital Records, 43,44.

2. Lincoln Tax Records, Book 3: 4, 1770; Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors, V, 393.

vironment in which the events took place. In addition to that distinction, they were the homes of two of the minutemen who challenged the British Army's expedition to Concord. Is that all that can be said about their historical significance? Did events take place in and around them that made them more important than the other structures that lined the roads between Boston and Colonel Barrett's farm and mill? Some writers have thought so, and a critical survey of what they have written needs to be undertaken to assess the role of houses and their occupants in the drama of Lexington-Concord.

Basing her work upon an account in the "Boston Evening Transcript" for April 18, 1900, Ellen Chase wrote the following Hartwell story:

When Revere was taken prisoner by Folly Pond, about a mile west from Old Bull Tavern, on the borders of Lexington and Lincoln, Dr. Prescott, knowing the country, made a long detour northward through swamp, wood, and field and regained the road at Hartwell's Tavern. Rousing the old men who kept it, he put his horse at its best speed for Concord. The brothers, John and Ephraim, were too aged and feeble to play an active part in the coming fray, but they immediately sent a black woman, a former slave, to rouse Captain William Smith of the Lincoln Minute Company, who lived nearly half a mile away toward Lexington. The road just beyond was overhung with trees, and panic-stricken, the old soul flew to Samuel Hartwell's door (a son of one of the tavern keepers), waking all within by her frantic cries that the British were after her. Seeing she was too unstrung to go further, Mrs. Hartwell put the three month old baby in her arms, saying, "If you will take care of my baby, I will go and rouse the Captain," adding, "Sam, make yourself ready, and saddle

your horse. I'll be back in time to get you some breakfast." Soon after she had returned, the sergeant rode off with musket and powder-horn to join the Militia; and Captain Smith, having first sent messengers some two miles south to ring the Lincoln Meeting-house bell as an alarm, also rode off to Concord.

When her husband had gone Mrs. Hartwell did up his morning chores about the barn, turned the cattle loose, and had just collected a few cherished articles - a mirror and some silver-ware - and laid them beside the baby, when the tramp of the British could be heard marching nearer and nearer. Going to the door she shaded her eyes and saw the winding line of red and flashing bayonets coming on and on between the pasture lands. As they passed, the scarlet coats, white gaiters, powdered wigs, and bosom pins made a rare show and she used to say years after: "If it hadn't been for the purpose they came for, I should say it was the handsomest sight I ever saw in my life!" When they were all gone by, she and her flock of little ones went two miles off the road to her father Flint's in Lincoln³

Writing two years later, Frank Warren Coburn told a somewhat less romantic story:

After the northeasterly angle of the road turns again easterly toward Lexington. Half or three quarters of a mile along are the two Hartwell houses, still standing (1912), on the northerly side of the road, and but a few hundred feet apart.

In the first westerly, or first one, lived Sergt. John Hartwell, and in the easterly one, Sergt. Samuel Hartwell, both members of Capt. Smith's Lincoln Company. Both were absent on duty then, but the wife of Samuel was at home. She furnished a vivid narrative of what she saw and experienced that afternoon and the following morning.

3. Ellen Chase, The Beginning of the American Revolution, III, 2.

Her first alarm of the coming Britons was reports of musketry, seemingly in the vicinity of the Brooks Tavern. Then nearer and nearer to the bloody angle. Then the hurrying red-coats themselves, anxious and wild in their demeanor, as they hurried along past her house. And how one, in his insane anger, fired into their garret, though he could see no foeman there.⁴

Coburn's account follows Mary Flint Hartwell's story that was produced in Abram English Brown's Beneath Old Roof Trees.⁵

In 1930 Harvard professor Frank Wilson Chaney Hersey, a native of Lincoln, published a somewhat different and much more romantic version of Mary Hartwell's story:

At the point where the road curved northward they [a patrol of British officers, April 18] passed the farmhouse of Captain William Smith of the Lincoln Minute Men. This stood (and still stands) on a knoll several rods to the right of the road, sheltered by a tall elm. They now slowed down to a walk. Some distance farther west they came to the first of the two Hartwell houses. This was the home of Samuel Hartwell, who was a sergeant in the company of Minute Men. It is now known as Hartwell Farm. The second was the Hartwell Tavern, kept by Ephraim Hartwell, Samuel's father.

It was about half-past eight or nine o'clock when the officers filed by the house of Samuel Hartwell. Sukey, a slave girl, was gathering chips in the dooryard as kindling for the morning.

4. Frank Warren Coburn, The Battle of April 19, 1775 in Lexington, Concord, Lincoln, Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville and Charlestown, Massachusetts, 102.

5. Abram English Brown, Beneath Old Roof Trees, 221.

Seeing a train of persons on horseback, two abreast, all wrapped in long cloaks, she rushed into the house and cried: "Oh, Mistress Hartwell, there's a funeral going by." They both went to the window and watched the mysterious cavalcade pass out of sight.⁶

When he describes the events of the Revere-Prescott ride, Professor Hersey reaches the romantic climax of the Hartwell story. After discussing Paul Revere's capture on the road between the Hartwell houses and the Lexington line, he takes up the story of Dr. Prescott's escape from the British patrol and his ride to Concord. The role of the Hartwells is given in the following:

Well might Revere have rejoiced at the escape of young Dr. Prescott, for long before he himself had been released the alarm had been spread through Lincoln and Concord. Prescott, after eluding the officers in the swamp, circled northward through the thickets and then westward until he emerged in the fields behind Samuel Hartwell's house. He cautiously rode up to the back of the house and knocked loudly on the kitchen door. Sergeant Hartwell, Mary, his young wife, the children, and Sukey, the slave-girl, were all awakened. Prescott eagerly delivered his message about the march of the Regulars, told them of his escape from the patrol, and urged them to spread the news to Captain Smith of the Lincoln Minute Men. He then came out on the road, and dashed off round the sharp angles of the hillside, down the long straight slope to the smooth meadows, and so to Concord Village. At once the bell was set a-ringing. Had ever lover coming home from courting made such a momentous ride?

All was bustle in the Hartwell household. Samuel was hated by the Tories for his activities in the cause of liberty. Not only was he first sergeant

6. Frank Wilson Chaney Hersey, Heroes of the Battle Road, 2-3.

of the Minute Men, but being a gunsmith, he had repaired during the spring many arms for his compatriots. He at once began to get ready, to collect his equipment, to feed the horse and prepare it for saddling. The two little girls, Polly, aged four, and Sally, two, were crying their fright. Mary holding her five-months-old baby in her arms, told Sukey to run down the road to Captain Smith's, the next house eastward, and notify him that the British were coming. But Sukey, remembering the grim procession of horsemen she had seen in the evening, was terrified. She rolled her eyes, cried out that the British would catch her and kill her, and refused to leave the house. Then, Mary, the courage of her pioneer ancestors kindling within her, said: "If you will take care of my baby, Sukey, I will go and rouse Captain Smith. I'll be back to get the breakfast ready." She put the baby in Sukey's arms, and throwing on a cloak, stepped out into the dews of night. Leaving the dark shadow of the elm trees in front of the house, she resolutely made her way along the road under the white lustre of the moon, and turned up the lane leading to the Captain's house on a knoll. When at last she knocked at the door and gave him the message, she felt a thrill of pride that she, a woman, had succeeded in carrying the alarm which was sweeping throughout Middlesex. She returned from her mission safely, and prepared breakfast for her husband at the great fireplace in the kitchen. As he rode off with musket and powder horn to join his company, she bade him a loving God-speed.⁷

The rest of Professor Hersey's narrative of the Hartwell's activities on the 19th tells of how Sukey disappeared, not to return until the 20th; of Mary's taking her children to her father's home; her return to find her home intact, save for a few bullet holes and a musket thrust through a window, and her following her father-in-

7. Ibid., 20-22.

law as he gathered up the dead British soldiers and took them to the Lincoln Burying Ground for burial, witnessing that event as the "first mourner."⁸

All of these stories are based, according to their writers, upon an oral tradition that derived from Samuel's wife, Mary, who, as has been noted, died in 1846 at the age of 98. All of the printed versions appeared many years after her death - the first fifty years - and were obtained from grandchildren who were themselves past middle-age when the transmission took place.⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that they differ in detail.

Important questions appear when the accounts are compared with one another and studied in connection with other, documented, information.

Turning first to Chase's account, which is taken almost verbatim from the story published in the April 18, 1900, issue of the "Boston Evening Transcript," some glaring errors are apparent. For instance, she wrote that two brothers, Ephraim and John, "too aged and feeble to play an active part in the coming fray," lived in the tavern.

8. Ibid., 23, 30.

9. The first printed account appeared in Abram E. Brown's Beneath Old Roof Trees in 1896, when Jonas Hartwell was seventy-five, Mary Hartwell Rogers, sixty-six, and Samuel Hartwell, sixty-two. Lincoln Vital Records, 43, 44. It was shortly before this that Professor Hersey heard the stories from these grandchildren. Hersey, op. cit., 1.

Ephraim was sixty-eight and past the age when he would be liable for militia duty. But he must not have been very feeble, since he lived more than eighteen more years.¹⁰ John was his son, not his brother; and he was a sergeant in the Lincoln Company of Minutemen, later serving as a lieutenant and captain in the militia. He was twenty-eight when the Revolution began.¹¹ The "black woman, a former slave," who was sent to arouse Captain William Smith was Violet, whom Ephraim acquired in 1769 or '70 and was still a slave when he made his will in 1786, in spite of State Supreme Court decisions of 1781 and 1784 that held that the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 had rendered slavery illegal.¹² The youngest child in the household was Lucy, who was not three but five months old - not a very important point, but one that reflects on Miss Chase's carelessness with detail.

10. Lincoln Vital Records, 164.

11. Ibid.; Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors, V, 393-4.

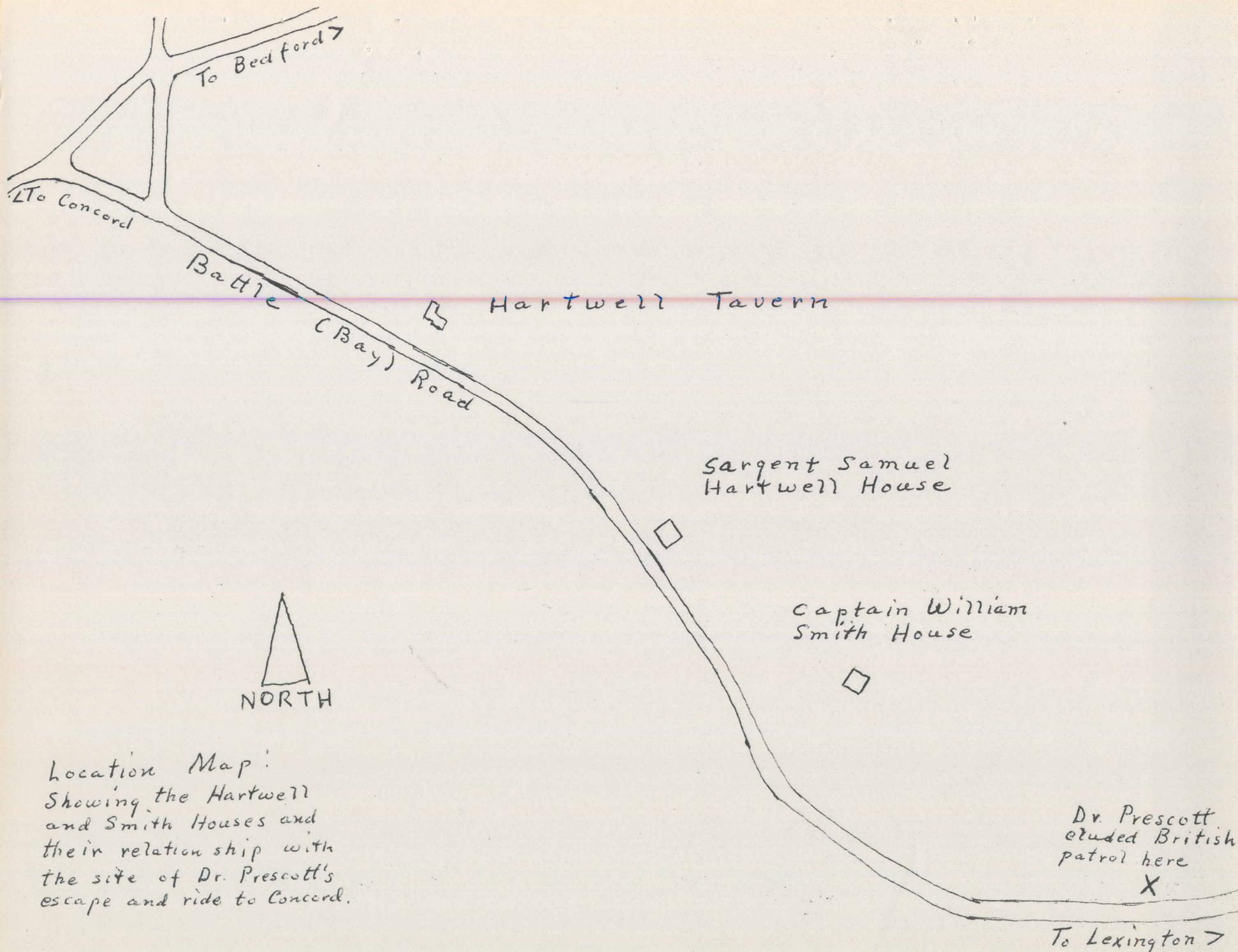
12. The abolition of slavery in Massachusetts was gradual, coming to pass partly as a result of a number of "freedom cases" that were tried over an extended period of time. The case referred to in this instance was one that had grown out of Qwock Walker's suing his putative owner, Nathaniel Jennison, for his freedom, pleading that he had been promised manumission. While the suit was pending, Jennison seized Walker, and in the resulting case, Chief Justice William Cushing held that the Constitution of 1780 abolished slavery. The result was not immediate emancipation, but a continuation of a series of "freedom cases" that resulted in the eventual freeing of those still bound. By the time of the First Federal Census (1790) there were no slaves in Massachusetts. Ephraim Hartwell had simply ignored the Cushing decision, Violet never sued for her freedom, and she was still a slave when the will was written. However, she was not listed in the inventory of personal property that was made

The version that appeared on Professor Hersey's Heroes of the Battle Road covers a longer period of time - from the evening of April 18 through the 20th and gives additional details. Writing in 1930, he recounted the Hartwell story as he received it as a boy sometime in the 1890's from Jonas and Samuel Hartwell, who had it from their grandmother, who died in 1846.

Professor Hersey began his story with an account of how Samuel's slave-girl, Sukey, saw the British officers patrolling the road at between 8:30 and 9:00 the night of the 18th and with her mistress watched them as they went along the road. This was quite a feat to accomplish at such an hour. More significant, Samuel Hartwell never owned a slave. His father owned Violet, but no other member of the Hartwell and Flint families in Lincoln was a slave-owner.

Like the Chase account, the highlight of the story is Mary's carrying the alarm to Captain William Smith. However, the accounts differ in that according to earlier publications, Dr. Prescott went to the tavern, from whence the Negro woman went to Samuel's house and aroused that family, while Hersey wrote that the Doctor went to Samuel's house and gave the alarm. Chase described the servant as

April 15, 1795, by which time she was either free or dead. See John D. Cushing, "The Cushing Court and the Abolition of Slavery in Massachusetts: More Notes on the Qwock Walker Case," American Journal of Legal History, V (1961), 118-26; 438-42; William O' Brien, S. J., "Did the Jennison Case Outlaw Slavery in Massachusetts?", William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Series (1960); XVIII; Middlesex County Probate no. 10560, Ephraim Hartwell, item no. 1 and 2, Will and Inventory; Lincoln Tax List, Book 3:4, 1770.



Location Map:
Showing the Hartwell
and Smith Houses and
their relationship with
the site of Dr. Prescott's
escape and ride to Concord.

old, but Hersey called her a slave-girl. Both writers told that the Negro was too frightened to run to Captain Smith's and that Mary, true to her pioneer heritage, carried out the mission of rousing the commander of the local minutemen.

We come to a point of some interest when we note that Captain Smith's house stands between the point where Prescott eluded the British officers and the Hartwell houses. While, as the two accounts agree, Prescott rode away from the road to avoid capture, a route through the fields and thickets that would by-pass the Smith home and bring him to either of the Hartwell houses, especially on horse-back at night, would have delayed his urgent arrival at Concord beyond what was necessary. He had been out earlier on his visit to his sweetheart and must have been reasonably certain that there were no other patrols between him and his destination. He had to be concerned about pursuit, but not about interception. It also seems strange that he would by-pass the home of the minute company's commander, whose alerting would have been an urgent matter to anyone raising the countryside, in favor of going to the home of one of the enlisted men and entrusting him with notifying the Captain. The normal course for him to have taken would have been to go directly as the circumstances permitted to Smith's, arouse him, and continue on his way. However, since Prescott left no account, we have no way of knowing what was in his mind. Perhaps he by-passed the Smith house because he feared that the patrol would expect him to

go there - hence he took a more circuitous route. However, a short-cut across the fields to Smith's house would probably have been as effective an evasive measure as the wider detour to either Hartwell house, which, if he had been pursued, would have placed him behind the patrol and in extreme danger of interception.

A matter that piques this writer's curiosity is why Samuel did not go to rouse his commanding officer. Concern for his wife's safety would have been a consideration. The only justification for allowing Mary to go to Smith's would have been the time element - she could arouse the Captain while Samuel got ready. However, since he waited while she went to Smith's and then returned to prepare his breakfast before he set out to join his company, the time factor seems less significant. A more expeditious course would have been for Samuel to have awakened Smith, returned home to a breakfast prepared while he was on his errand, and then joined his company - or better yet, alerted the Captain, shared his breakfast, and accompanied him to the muster.

If Professor Hersey's account is accurate, the Samuel Hartwell House's significance is enhanced by its being the home of an especially active partisan in the Revolutionary cause. According to Hersey, "Samuel was hated by the Tories for his activities in the cause of liberty. Not only was he first sergeant of the Minute Men, but, being a gunsmith, he repaired during the spring many arms for his compatriots." The statement is suspect for two reasons: there

is no documentary evidence to support it, and there is such evidence that disputes his assessment of Samuel's importance.

Neither town nor provincial records, nor any other known contemporary source, such as diaries or memoirs, point to Samuel's being especially active in local politics. He was on no committee and filled no offices that would identify him as being any more advanced in his devotion to the "cause of liberty" than any of his neighbors. His military service was limited militia duty, first as a sergeant - not first or orderly sergeant - in the Lincoln Minute Company and then as a quartermaster in Colonel Eleazer Brook's Regiment. His total of active service was not equal to that of either of his brothers, John and Isaac.¹³

His being hated by the Tories would, of course, have depended upon his identification with the Colonial cause; but since there were very few in the area who could be called Tories in any aggressive sense in April 1775, he did not have much to fear from their hatred. Again, there is no contemporary evidence that he was the object of Loyalist attention or animosity.

It is possible that Samuel may have repaired muskets, but it is unlikely that he did so on a large scale, since he was a locksmith, not a gunsmith, and there were gunsmiths in Lexington, Menotomy, Bedford, Concord, and Lincoln.¹⁴

13. Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors, V, 395.

14. Lincoln Tax Records, 1770; Lincoln Town Records, 1224.

Chase's story of Mary's watching the British column march past on its way to Concord, and her description of their appearance: "If it hadn't been for the purpose they came for, I should say it was the handsomest sight I ever saw in my life," has a ring of truth.¹⁵

In contrast to the Samuel Hartwell House, writers have had little to say about the Hartwell Tavern's associations with the Lexington-Concord story. Its owners have not been raised from obscurity, no heroic young mother and crying children lived there in April 1775. It is just a road-side tavern, occupied by an elderly couple and their minuteman son. That the son helped fire the "shot heard 'round the world" and saw more extensive service than his brother has been obscured in the interests of a good story.

The little that was written about the tavern maintained the level of critical research that characterized the Chase-Hersey rendering of the Samuel and Mary Hartwell saga. The house was described as a tavern whose oldest portion, the gambrel-roofed section, dated from the seventeenth century, with the larger portion added in 1733, thus reversing the order of construction. As has been noted, the gambrel-roofed portion did not exist in 1775, unless the terminology in Ephraim's 1786 will is completely misleading.

It is unfortunate that Mary Hartwell's story was not published until nearly half a century after her death, when its garbling by

15. Chase, op. cit.

descendants and writers enCrusted what may have been a vivid piece of living history with filiopietistic legends. Dr. Prescott may have knocked at Samuel's door, and Mary may have carried the alarm to Captain Smith, but the evidence is too tenuous and the intermediate sources too suspect to warrant preserving and interpreting the houses as anything more than the homes of minutemen and parts of the historic environment of the Battle Road - justification enough for Park Service purposes.

In closing, it should be said in defense of devoting so much time to the Hartwell story that much of the justification for reconstruction of the burned Samuel Hartwell House rests in its alleged association with the Prescott - Mary Hartwell story.

CHAPTER IV

Summary and Recommendations

Samuel Hartwell House

The history of the Samuel Hartwell House may be summarized in the following manner:

- 1693 - 1716: Sometime during this period, probably prior to 1709, Samuel Hartwell, Jr., built his house on the Bay (Battle Road).
- 1744: Samuel, Jr., died, and Ephraim, his son, inherited the house.
- 1744 - 1764: Occupation of the house during this period is uncertain. However, Samuel's widow, Experience, probably lived in at least a portion of it for some time. It is possible that the house was owned by John Brown during part of the period.
- 1764 - 1829: Sargeant Samuel Hartwell lived in the house. This was the period of the house's major historical significance.

After a succession of owners, the Samuel Hartwell House became a restaurant in 1929. On the night of February 18, 1968, the house burned.

No documentary data have been located that provide information concerning the house's construction history.

The writer of this report recommends that the ruins of the Samuel Hartwell House be stabilized and interpreted through a professionally planned and produced way-side marker.

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CHAPTER V

Summary and Recommendations

Hartwell Tavern

The history of the Hartwell Tavern is summarized in the following manner:

- 1732: Hartwell Tavern constructed.
- 1732 - 1783: A new dwelling house was erected on a part of Samuel Hartwell, Junior's land in east Concord and given to his son, Ephraim, who lived in it until his death in 1793, a total of sixty years.
- 1786 or earlier: Gambrel-roof addition.

The only documentary evidence that sheds light upon the construction history of the house is Ephraim's will, dated 1786, that indicated that the gambrel-roofed portion was added a short time prior to the writing of the will.

It is recommended that the house be restored and used as a historic house museum, as proposed in the Administrative Data Section, Hartwell Tavern.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

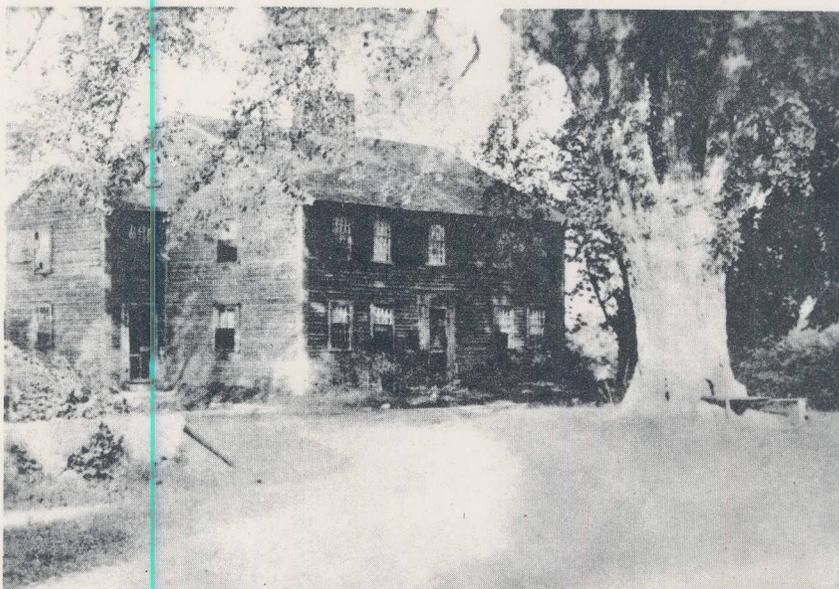


The Hartwell Tavern Sign
(Lexington Historical Society)

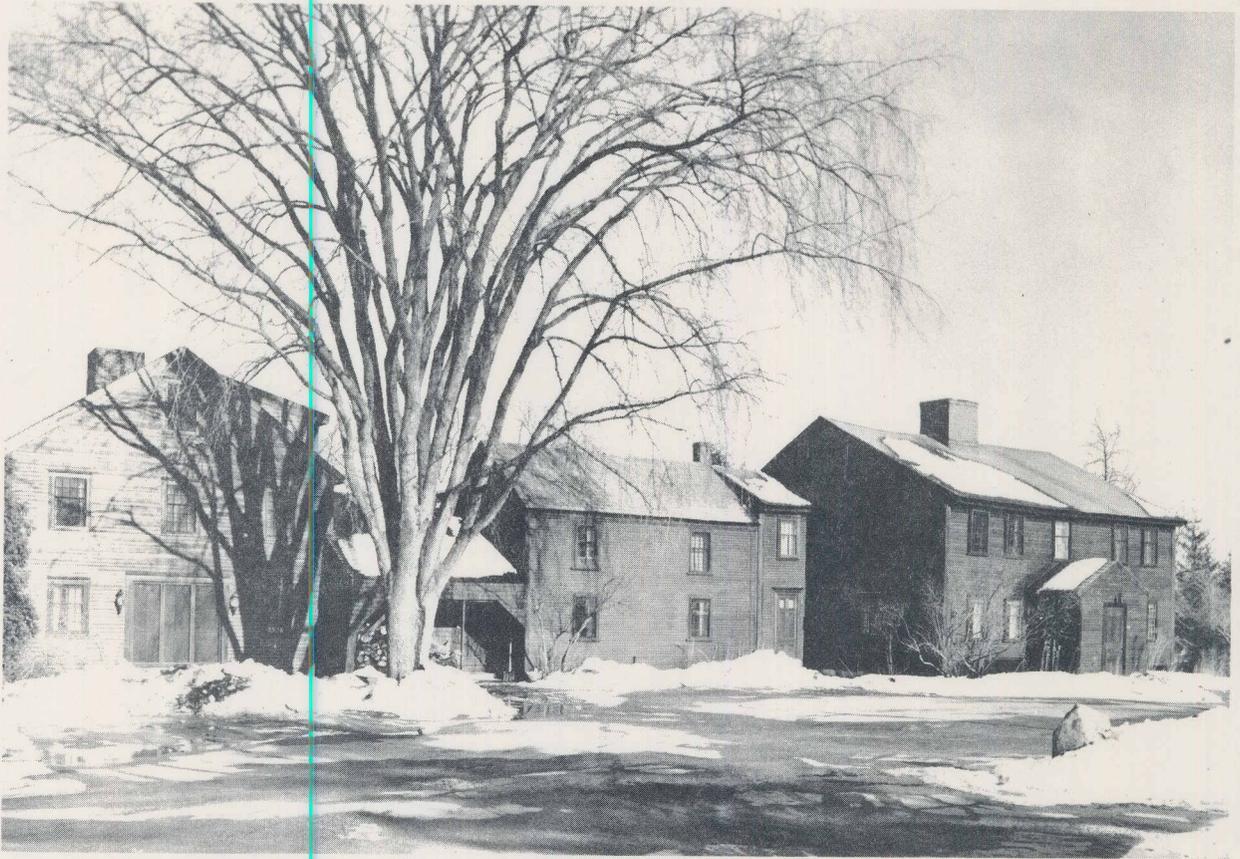


Hartwell Tavern (ca. 1900)

The gambrel-roofed portion was probably added in the mid - 1780's



Sargeant Samuel Hartwell House
(ca. 1900)



Hartwell Tavern (ca. 1965)