

***The following — “Persons Associated with the Smith-Appleby House” — is an excerpt from:***

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

THE SMITH-APPLEBY HOUSE

Stillwater Road

Smithfield, Rhode Island

Prepared for:

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B. Persons Associated with the Smith-Appleby House

Elisha Smith, the builder of the Smith-Appleby House, was the grandson of John Smith the Miller. Bicknell, in his History of Rhode Island,<sup>50</sup> writes that Smith was born in 1595, presumably in England, married Alice \_\_\_\_\_ and had two children, John and Elizabeth. While residing in Dorchester, he was banished in 1635 by the General Court of Massachusetts:

"John Smith shalbe sent within 6 weekes  
out of this jurisdiction for dyvers  
dangerous opinions wch hee holdeth &  
hath dyvulged, if in the meane tyme he  
removes not himselfe out of this  
plantacion" 51

John the Miller joined Roger Williams when he crossed the Seekonk River in June of 1636 to found the first settlement of Providence. Williams wrote on November 17, 1677: "I consented to John Smith, Miller at Dorchester to go with me."<sup>52\*</sup> Smith relocated his family soon after the founding of the colony, as John (Jr.) and Elizabeth (his daughter) are listed in a census of Moshassuch and Pawtuxet (sic) taken on September 1, 1636. John Smith, Miller must have assumed an active role in the affairs of the new settlement, for in 1641 he is recorded as town clerk. His usefulness as a miller was recognized by the inhabitants on January 1, 1646 when they granted him land on the Moshassuck River less than one-quarter of a mile from the spring site, the center of the

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\* Bicknell states that Roger Williams was joined by four others, John Smith the Miller, William Harris, Francis W. Ickes, and Thomas Angell. Other historians report that five others were with Williams.

area laid out by the first settlers for house lots. According to Bicknell, Smith "found a mill-site for a corn mill....and located house and mill-one building probably-on the west bank of the Moshassuck, at the falls."<sup>53</sup> The mill is described as a stamping mill (where the grain was pounded, as opposed to the more traditional grinding between two stones), giving rise to the name Stamper's Hill for the site, at approximately today's Mill and Charles Streets. John Smith, Miller is also on record as the grantee of a five acre house lot in the original settlement opposite the spring, three lots north of that granted to Roger Williams. In 1647 he was granted:

"tenn acors mor or Lese At or about the place wheer the mill now standeth, sixe Acores mor or Lese of meddow Lieng at the uppear End of that which is Caled the Great meddow on the southwestard sid of the River Called Moshucsuck six Acors of meddow at the plac comonly Caled wain-cote meddow lieing and being part of it on the south side and part of it on the North side of the River...<sup>54</sup>

John Smith the Miller died sometime before 1649, at which time John Jr. and his widow (d. circa 1650), as administrators of the estate, signed articles of agreement with the Proprietors granting to them exclusive rights to maintain a mill in the settlement. John Smith, Jr., the father of Elisha, continued the operation of the mill until his death in 1682, and expanded the Smith family holdings by purchasing two acres of land near the mill from Hugh Bewit in 1655. In 1665, he participated in a division of land in his father's

right, drawing lot 21, which brought him:

"six acres of the Neck, abutting Arthur Fenner, John Jones and Shadrach Manton, six acres at a place called New Bridge, and 150 acres abutting John Brown up the West river, being a part of a meadow or low land which was granted to John Smith Sr. and John Smith, Jr, by the town." 55

John Smith, Jr. was also active in the early affairs of the town and was made Ensign (November 6, 1654), served as a juror (1661) and was deputy town clerk (1646-72), and following his father's lead, was town clerk (1672-76). He married Sarah Whipple (b. February 2, 1642, d. after 1687) and fathered ten children (see appendix for geneology). His will (February 22, 1682, approved by Town Council June 2, 1682) left to his widow Sarah:

"...half the mill with ye halfe of ye land neere viz) ten acres upon ye hill, & ye valley whereon ye house standeth to say ye one halfe of it, And ye halfe of all ye land & meadow at ye west River, reaching as farr as the lower End of william Haukins is meadow, & halfe my meadow at ye Great meadow, & halfe my part of ye Saw mill, & ye meadow at wanScott the halfe of it; & six acrs of land in ye neck ye halfe of it; with the halfe ye house & goods & cattle, The halfe of all which is abovementioned I bequeath to my wife dureing her life, & ye other halfe to my son John Smith, So: that at my wifs decease ye med at wenscot to be resined up to be divided equally amoung his brothers & himselfe, to say into seven parts.....And to my Daughter Sarrah I give forty acrs of land; any my Daughter Alice forty Acrs which is to be laid out this side ye seven mile line. And to my daughter may ten shillings. I give likewise to

my son John sixty acrs of land at  
wanscot....And ye remainder of my  
land there to be Equally devided  
among his six brethren...Likewise  
a hundred & forty Acrs at wenscot  
meadow to be equally devided among  
the seven sons..." 56

*The West River is at  
Wanscot. Not Wanscot.*

It is the land described as "meadow at ye west River  
reaching as farr as the lower End of william Haukins is  
meadow" that is the site of the Smith-Appleby House given  
to Elisha Smith in 1709, "on which he built his dwelling  
house" (see page 2). (William Hawkins is acknowledged as  
one of the first settlers in that part of the "outlands"  
that was to become Smithfield.)

Elisha Smith, the ninth child of John and Sarah, was  
born on April 14, 1680 in Providence and married Experience  
Mowry (b. February 8, 1680, d. after 1766) before 1771.  
Local traditions hold that Elisha and Experience moved to  
the "outlands" around 1700 and that their first child,  
Penelope, was born there on December 5, 1701. They had  
nine other children, all of whom were born at what was to  
become Smithfield -- Philip (January 6, 1703), Noah (May 7,  
1705), Sarah (April 28, 1707), Jonathon (1710), Abraham  
(July 19, 1711), Richard (April 2, 1714), Mary (October 29,  
1716), Stephen (October 28, 1718), and Daniel (March 1, 1723).

As discussed above, Elisha was very active in acquiring  
real estate and owned land that extended from Georgiaville  
and Spragueville in Smithfield to Trakin, North Smithfield.  
He was president of the first Smithfield Town Council in

1732<sup>57</sup> and as witnessed by deeds made in 1718<sup>57</sup> and 1733<sup>58</sup> carried on the family tradition of milling, selling a saw mill to his brother Benjamin and giving a grist mill and saw mill to his son Abraham. While no inventory for Elisha has been discovered which would help to indicate his social class and occupation, numerous deeds refer to him as Yeomen (an independent farmer) and it is assumed that he was primarily concerned with cultivating his property to support his family, with the mills as a secondary source of income. By the early 1730s, eight of the ten children were in their teens and would have been available to help with the farm work, freeing Elisha to at least supervise the mills. In 1734-5, however, Philip, Noah, Jonathon and Abraham all married (Noah for the second of three marriages) with Richard to follow suit in 1738. Penelope had previously married Israel Phillips, who purchased a tract of land from her brother Jonathon<sup>60</sup> on October 10, 1735. In November 1742, Phillips sold his "homestead farm" to Samuel Buxton,<sup>61</sup> Penelope yielding her right-of-dower. It is assumed that Penelope left the Smith household on her marriage. Elisha's deed-of-gift in 1733-4 to Noah, his second son, states that Noah was already living at the site granted him and not at the homestead. Elisha also granted land to his son Jonathon and to Abraham, who settled in what is now Spragueville in 1733 and had a grist mill of his own. He is buried there.



Richard had relocated to Gloucester by 1746, where his brother Stephen had moved the year before. Daniel received 70 acres of land in Gloucester in May 1762<sup>62</sup> from his father, the deed referring to him as "Daniel Smith of Smithfield, Innholder." Therefore, it appears that only Philip, the oldest son, remained at the Smith property after marriage, and even he may have left it for a short period (see below).

Elisha mentions "my old farm" and a "dwelling, saw-mill, grist mill and orchard" in two of the deeds-of-gift to his sons, leading to speculation that he may have moved to a larger house as his family outgrew the "old farm" (re: Abraham's tract). His residence during this period is a moot point, but he is said to have died at the homestead (certainly in Smithfield) after November 25, 1766 and is buried at the Smith-Appleby family cemetery at the farm.

Philip married Waite Waterman, daughter of Ensign Resolved and Mercy Waterman, on February 16, 1734-5. Resolved Waterman at that time owned and ran under license an important inn and tavern on Powder Mill Turnpike in the Greenville section of Smithfield. While there is the possibility that Philip and his new wife moved to Greenville to help with the tavern, there is no record of such. Philip was granted the Smith farm a year before his marriage and it is more likely that, following the custom of the oldest son, he stayed on at the homestead. At any rate, documents do place Philip at the Smith farm in 1737, when

he sold three acres to his neighbor, Thomas Steere.<sup>63</sup>

Philip and Waite had seven children, their dates of birth unrecorded: Elisha, Mercy (c. 1738-March 20, 1820), Hannah, Mary, John, Patience, and Resolved.

Philip died sometime before 1792, but had deeded the farm to John, his oldest living son in 1780<sup>64</sup> (Elisha had before the will was made). John's date of birth is not recorded, but he married Phebe Ballou, daughter of Abraham and Mary (Sayles) Ballou around 1761. He and Phebe had three children: Rispah (July 30, 1762), Mary (July 4, 1764), and Wait (b. c. 1767). Rispah married Levi Hunt April 4, 1793 and presumably died before 1807 as she is not mentioned in John's will. Mary married Jashub Wing of Smithfield -- her death is not recorded, but they had three children, Phebe, Wait and Lydia Wing. Wait Smith married Thomas Appleby of Smithfield, son of James and Esther (Sayles) Appleby, on November 14, 1784. Appleby, born March 10, 1760, is the first Appleby to be associated with the Smith-Appleby House, inheriting the property with his wife on John's death. John's first wife, Phebe, died sometime between 1767 and February 13, 1794 when John took as his second wife, Wait Brown, daughter of Charles and Wait (Dexter) Field and the widow of John Brown, son of Deputy Governor Elisha Brown. This union resulted in two sons, Resolved and Noah.

John Smith died on February 26, 1807. His will, quoted above,<sup>65</sup> left as dower rights one-half the "mansion house" and part of the farm lands to his widow Wait. Thomas Appleby,



John's son-in-law, was executor of the will, which left five-eighths of the estate to Thomas's wife, Wait, and one-eighth shares to each of three granddaughters, Phebe Smith, Wait Harris and Lydia Wing. John's widow, Wait, moved to Providence sometime after her husband's death in 1807, where she died on July 20, 1819.

Wait Smith Appleby, as mentioned, married Thomas Appleby in November 1784, at which time her father was still residing at the farm (he is buried in the family cemetery). She moved with her husband to Wionkheige Hill (Williams Road) and presumably remained there after they had inherited the Smith property in 1807. Wait died on October 15, 1843 and along with Thomas is buried at the Appleby homestead.

Thomas and Wait Smith Appleby had five children: Phebe, who married William Harris; Esther, who married Elisha Steere; John Smith Appleby (August 11, 1787); James, who married Amey Harris and died before December 9, 1843; and Thomas, who married Almy Mowry.

James Smith Appleby was twenty years old when his mother and father inherited the Smith farm and had married Patience Harris on June 18, 1809. It is probable that he either moved to the farm in 1807 or moved there after his marriage two years later. He and Patience had ten children: Thomas (October 18, 1810-January 7, 1870), Silas (July 27, 1812-1893), Waity (May 18, 1814, married Job Shaw), Mary J.

(March 20, 1816-June 7, 1831), Almy (April 5, 1818-July 9, 1886, unmarried), Louisa and Loan, twins (December 22, 1820-c.1874), Miranda (December 19, 1822-October 5, 1824), John Smith (August 25, 1830-August 8, 1904) and Patience J. (June 23, 1835, married Thomas Holden).

John Smith Appleby, Jr. farmed the homestead until his death on May 17, 1857 and ran a saw mill and grist mill as well. Maps dated 1852 and 1855, prepared by H. F. Walling and Company, show the farm house, listed as "J. S. Appleby" and the saw mill to the northwest (Figures 1 and 2). Figure 3, redrawn from an 1862 copy of an 1855 Map of Georgiaville Pond<sup>66</sup> also shows the house and mill, at "Appleby's Dam".

John Smith Appleby's wife, Patience, died in 1873, whereon the farm passed to John Jr., who had remained in residence and farmed the property and ran the mills after his father's death. An H. F. Walling map of 1862 (Figure 4) shows the mill, as does the Beer's Atlas of 1870 (Figure 5). John Jr. never married. He was prominent in the community, serving as a president of the town council, a member of the school committee and an assessor of taxes as well as holding a number of minor offices. He was also a director of the National Exchange Bank in Greenville and was considered by his contemporaries as one of the more successful farmers in the region.

John Jr. died on August 8, 1904 and left the farm to Sidney M. Appleby, the son of his older brother Silas.

Silas, who died in 1893, had left the homestead after his marriage to Julia Ballou in 1836, residing at several farms in Smithfield and moving later to Lincoln. He returned to Smithfield in 1888 where he lived at the Asahel Angell farm until his death. Silas had six children, the fourth being Sidney Merton Appleby, who was the oldest living son when John Smith Appleby died in 1904.

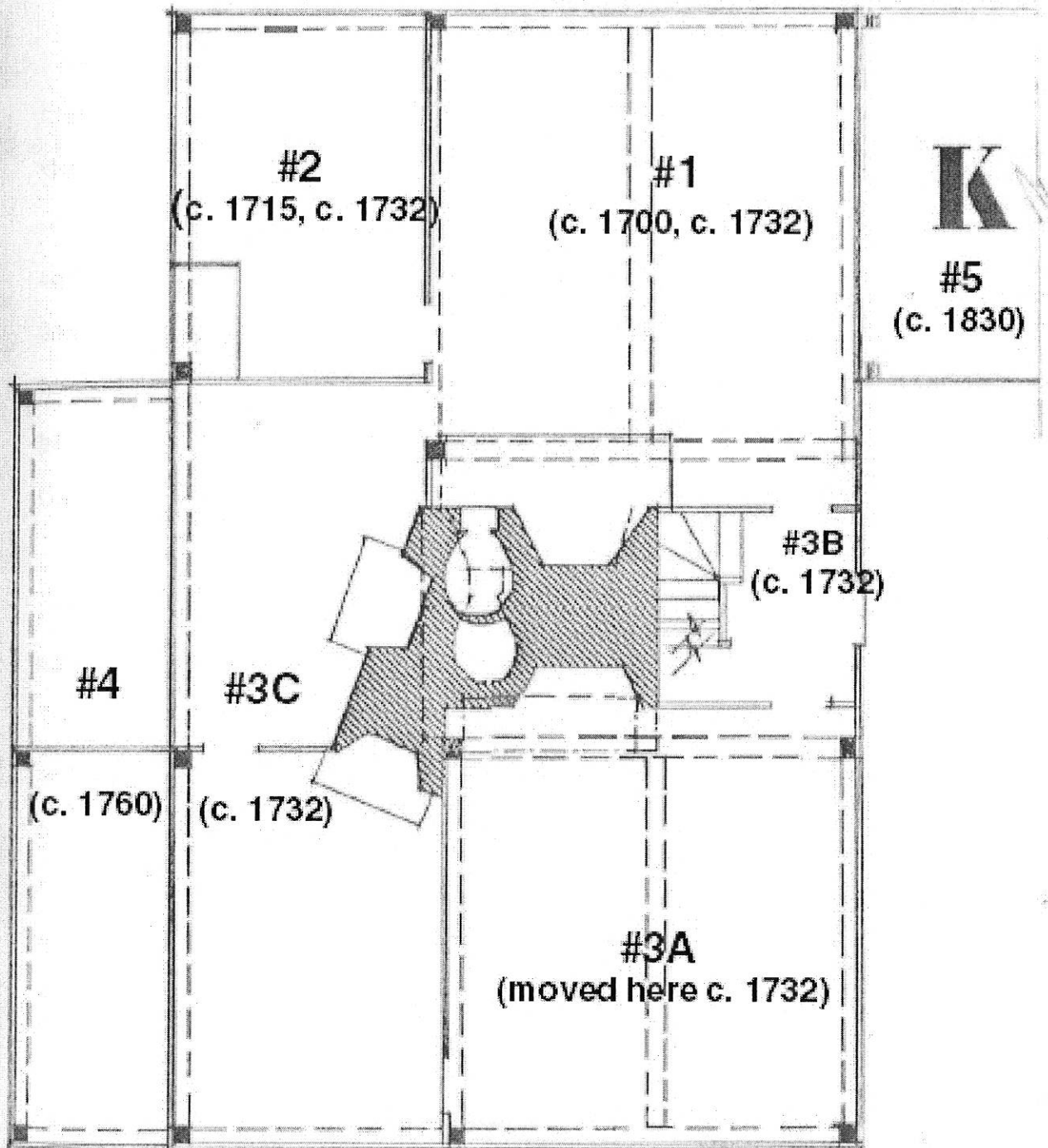
Sidney M. Appleby was born on August 21, 1846. He married Sarah A. Cozzens, a daughter of John Cozzens of Centerdale, on May 21, 1879 and moved to Limerock where he worked a dairy farm. In 1889, he moved to the Angell farm in Smithfield where his father was living, moving again in 1896 to Lincoln.

Sidney took occupancy of the Smith-Appleby farm in April 1905, retaining his dairy business and operating a milk route in Providence for a number of years thereafter. He and Sarah were married for nine years before Maria C. Appleby, their only child, was born on January 22, 1888.

Sarah died in 1890, supposedly taking her own life by drowning, and Sidney invited two of his sisters, Abbey, widow of George Harris, and Clara, a spinster, to live with him in Lincoln and help raise the one and one-half year old Maria.

Maria, the last of the Smith-Appleby line associated with the property, was seventeen when she moved to the farm.

Local residents recall her many problems living with the said to be domineering "Aunt Clara", resulting in Maria's prolonged absence from the farm. She worked at J & P Coates and at other local manufacturies, but took an active interest in the farm in the 1920s, especially when she and a friend who was to become her lifelong companion, Abbie Sergeant, began the construction of at first a six-hole public golf course, in 1927, later expanding to nine holes, known as the Stillwater Country Club, membership 25. Maria remained at the farm until her death in November 1959.



Smith Appleby House Building Sequence  
as determined by Russell Wright

