

Paschal Sheffield House
104 Old South Road
Southport
Fairfield
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-303

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-303

PASCHAL SHEFFIELD HOUSE

Location: 104 Old South Road, Southport, Fairfield County,
Connecticut

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.643760.4554530

Present Owner
and Occupant: Margaret Gordon Johnson

Present Use: Residence

Statement of
Significance: The original rectangular block of the Sheffield house
was erected circa 1826. As a structure which was de-
signed on a small scale for residential use, it was
correctly articulated in the classical temple form.
Paschal Sheffield was a well-respected member of the
Southport community throughout the nineteenth century
and his residence on South Road was known as the
"Sheffield House" even after he had moved to Fairfield.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1826.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The chain of title to the
land upon which the structure stands is recorded in the Fair-
field County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder, Fairfield
Town Hall, Fairfield.
 - 1826 Deed, March 16, 1826, recorded in Volume 40, page 342.
Paul King Sheffield to Paschal Sheffield.
 - 1882 Deed, October 16, 1882, recorded in Volume 62, page 276.
Paschal Sheffield to Jane A. Jennings.
 - 1919 Deed, June 9, 1919, recorded in Volume 95, page 423.
Jane A. Jennings to Walter Herbert Jennings, son,
half interest.
 - 1919 Deed, June 9, 1919, recorded in Volume 95, page 424.
Jane A. Jennings to Walter Herbert Jennings, one-
quarter interest.

- 1919 Deed, June 9, 1919, recorded in Volume 95, page 424.
Jane A. Jennings to E. W. Jennings, granddaughter,
one-quarter interest.
- 1920 Deed, March 19, 1920, recorded in Volume 99, page 234.
Guardian of Dorothy E. W. Jennings, minor to Winifred
Wilson.
- 1928 Deed, March 13, 1928, recorded in Volume 128, page 95.
Winifred Wilson to Alice Wilson.
- 1957 Deed, May 20, 1957, recorded in Volume 361, page 54.
Alice Wilson to David C. Johnson, Jr.
- 1966 Deed, April 15, 1966, recorded in Volume 498, page 324.
David C. Johnson, Jr. to Margaret Gordon Johnson.
3. Original plan and construction: The two-and-a-half story three-bayed rectangular block was probably the original structure. The exposed mortise-and-tenon timber framing in the attic suggests that the one-and-a-half story "L" section was added within twenty or thirty years. Both sections have rubble masonry foundations covered with finely cut ashlar masonry, and clapboard siding. The principal roof gable faces front (west) toward the street; the ridge of the "L" runs at a right angle to the main roof. A one-story portico frames the front doorway. Two pairs of fluted Greek Ionic columns support a correctly proportioned classical entablature, with an architrave, fillets, plain frieze, dental course and a cornice with low parapet. A one-story portico with an identical entablature resting on four (one is engaged) Roman Doric columns extends across the three-bay front facade of the wing. The main entry door, with two full-length panels, is framed by a moveable transom and side-lights of leaded-glass in a rosette motif.

The interior is laid out in a side-hall plan. On the first floor a double parlor extends along the entire north side. A dining room is behind the stairs in the side-hall. Three second-floor bedrooms correspond to the first-floor plan. Some doorways are framed with corner-block molding, carved in an acanthus leaf motif.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Paschal Sheffield residence was offered for sale or lease in 1884 and again in 1886. Contemporary newspaper advertisements describe in vivid detail the Sheffield estate as it existed then. On November 20, 1884, the Fairfield "Advertiser"

reported: "For Sale, Premises Suitable for a Grand Hotel in Southport. The pleasant and desirable Residence on the corner of South and New Streets, in Southport known as the SHEFFIELD HOUSE with the extensive lots in the rear, possessing all necessary conveniences, modern improvements, new out-houses, stables, carriage-room, poultry house, fine garden of rich black soil, laundry, bath-room and the advantage of two fine wells of pure water and a large cistern. This property is too well known to require description and is just suited with proper additional building, for a fine hotel property such as is greatly needed in Southport." In the July 1, 1886 issue of the Fairfield "Advertiser" the house was on the market again: "P. K. Sheffield's fine house in Southport, Conn. is offered for sale or lease for a term of years. These premises are well known. The house is in excellent condition, with all needed improvements. The grounds are simple: stable, barn, chicken house, etc., all in good order."

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

Photograph of Nehemiah Jennings House, 1906. In Pequot Library, Southport, Connecticut.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fairfield County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Fairfield "Advertiser," November 13, 1884; November 20, 1884; July 1, 1886.

Southport "Chronicle," May 12, 1892; June 9, 1892.

Prepared by D. T. VanZanten
Team Architect
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1966

Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
December 1978

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.