



STEPHEN MOREHOUSE HOUSE • 1799

36 Church Lane

The present Red Cross house was built by Stephen Morehouse in 1799 during a spurt of building activity between 1795 and 1805 while the Post Road was being built. It stood on the opposite side of Church Lane from where it now stands, facing the Saugatuck River.

The house quickly passed through a series of owners and was purchased in 1811 by David Judah, local merchant and Justice of the Peace, whose father had strong ties to a New York Synagogue. David married Esther, granddaughter of Westport's first Taylor, Lt. John, and they raised ten children. One daughter, also named Esther, married a son of Ebenezer Jesup, a wealthy merchant. Another daughter, Patty, married Lewis Raymond, manager of the Saugatuck Manufacturing Company. A son, David, became a sea captain, and another son, Henry, became an Episcopal minister.

David Judah died in 1824 and in 1836 the house was purchased by Capt. Abraham Sherwood, a brother of the renowned Sherwood triplet sea captains. A sketch by "Paul" in the Westporter in 1881 described Capt. Abe as a heavy man who very closely resembled General Winfield Scott. According to Reverend Coley*, the house originally had an "old colonial look" but Capt. Sherwood changed it "to a house with pretentious Ionic columns." (See inset.) Capt. Abraham and Henry Sherwood had a shipyard at Riverside Avenue just below the Post Road. Boats they built there included the sloops "Mary" and "Gem" and the schooner "Cora" with which they maintained a packet line between Westport and New York, Captain Abe being master of each at some period. The boats carried farm produce to New York and returned with merchandise ordered by Westport residents.

Frederick Kemper bought the house in 1889, moved it to its present location, and restored it closely to its original appearance, except that he turned the gable end to the street and added a cornice and pedimented front door, giving it a classical feeling. Frederick was Constable, Westport's one-man police force. The house remained in the Kemper family until 1959, when the estate of Mr. Kemper's daughter, Mrs. Winifred Peck, sold it to the Red Cross.

Research: Dorothea Malm

Photos: T. O'Connor Sloane, 1935(WPA)

Inset: Unknown

Father owned on both
sides Deborah Couche
West Side of Harmons
Stone Bridge in
meadow that belonged
to the
Towns of
all of Land & meadow
field of said And we of
of his Heirs Exec^{ors} &
ours forever to quit^{any} claim
tioned (except that Part
to each one of us in
of us our Heirs & our heirs
herein Parted Land
by lawfull Charge, and
meadow than our
to make good vach
made
and Seal in Fairfield

HISTORIC
DWELLINGS
IN
WESTPORT,
CONNECTICUT

1700 - 1884

Butt Seal
Butt Seal

Second Edition