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The Beach Tavern
Cheshire, Connecticut

HABS No. Conn. 32

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Connecticut

Historic American Buildings Survey
Harold H. Davis, District Officer
29 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

THE BEACH TAVERN

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Cheshire, New Haven County, Connecticut

Owner: Mrs. Frederick J. Porter, Cheshire

Date of Erection: Circa 1814

Builder: Abijah Beach

Present Condition: Good. Recently (1937) restored from
a very poor condition by its present owner and
now used by Roxbury School.

Number of Stories: Three

Materials of Construction: Frame-clapboard exterior
Stone foundations and chimneys
Cambrel roof-shingled

Other Existing Records; Newspaper article by Miss Nettie
A. Smith, resident of Cheshire in the New
Haven Register, July 15, 1933.

List of Photographs:

1. East Elevation (After alterations)
2. East Elevation (Before ")
3. Southwest Elevation
4. Detail of Back Bar
5. End of Ballroom showing Fidler's Balcony

THE BEACH TAVERN

Cheshire, Connecticut

An air of glamor and romance has always been attached to the gambrel roofed house on Main Street, built for and used as a tavern for some forty years until its sale by Samuel Thompson to Martin Brennan in 1852.

It was built with its gable end measuring forty-five feet fronting the street and is a very large and finely proportioned dwelling; the windows in the third story have always caused much comment; interesting and curious. In the days of horse-driven vehicles, it was nothing strange for the driver of one to stop and look with wonder at the house and wonder audibly why so many windows ~~show~~ appear in the third story.

The room which these windows lighted was the Ball Room and it evidently was built and equipped for that purpose and has always been so-called, although many other meetings have been held there.

Under the center window is a platform; seats built about the rooms have covers which opened, and it is supposed, held coats and hats of those meeting there. On the south side of the room is a fireplace and in the southwest corner, a musician's gallery.

As one comes up the stairway leading to the Ball Room, there is a room at the left which is supposed to have been used for refreshments, solid or liquid.

Although to modern eyes the ball room seems small, its high ceiling and forty feet of length gives it an air of space, which in the far off days, evidently seemed spacious.

This was the leading public house of the town between the time it was built by Abijah Beach and the time of its purchase by the Brennan family.

There was originally a bar room on the right of the entrance with three shelves topped by a deep moulding from which small ornaments of wood supported compartments divided with curving tops. This old back bar is now used as book cases.

The Beach Tavern, Cheshire, Conn.

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After the opening of the turnpike which gave the most direct route between New Haven and Hartford, the stage coach business flourished and this tavern with its opulent air and many, (for these times) conveniences, had much patronage.

It is not easy for us to realize the unique place the tavern occupied in the olden days. That the keepers of the tavern were men of standing is shown by their names: Samuel Cook, Richard Gregory, Horatio Terrell, Jesse Nichols, Samuel Thompson and its builder, Abijah Beach, all of whom were men of standing in the community.

Source of Information: Article by Miss Nettie A. Smith, resident of Cheshire, in the New Haven Register, July 15, 1933.

Author *Margaret M. Blake*
Approved *Harold H. Davis*

revised July 1938
APJ.