

*The Topsfield Common, surrounded by pleasing 18th and 19th century buildings, is a lovely example of a traditional New England green.*

*A stone commemorates the three Topsfield women executed during the Salem Witchcraft Hysteria.*

*The Common served as a training ground for the militia, and it was from there, that the Topsfield militia marched towards Lexington to take part in the momentous events of April 1775.*

*The Topsfield Historical Society was founded in 1894 to collect, preserve and study materials relating to the history of the town, to encourage the study of natural history, to preserve and maintain the Capen House and other structures acquired by the Society, and to publish selected historical information.*

*For information on membership call  
508.887.3998*

*Directions*

*Interstate 95, Exit 50 to Route 1 North. Proceed about 3.5 miles to the traffic light at High Street (Route 97), and turn left. Proceed about .5 miles to the Topsfield Common. The Capen House site is marked by a sign on Route 97 and is to the right, adjacent to the Common.*



*printed on recycled paper*

## Captain Joseph Gould Barn

*Properties of the Topsfield  
Historical Society  
One Howlett Street  
Topsfield, Massachusetts*

*Open mid-June to mid-September  
on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from  
1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.*

*Tea served by the  
Priscilla Capen Herb Society on  
Wednesday, 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.*

*Admission: Donation Requested  
Children admitted free*

*For More Information call*

**New Phone # 978 887 3998  
[www.topsfieldhistory.org](http://www.topsfieldhistory.org)**

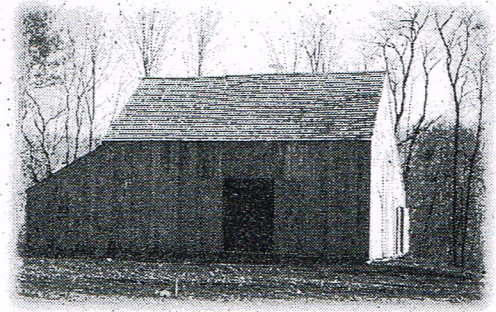


## The Parson Capen House

(1683)

The Parson Capen House, built in the summer of 1683, for the Reverend Joseph Capen, is beautifully situated on a knoll adjacent to the historic Topsfield Common. The house has long been considered one of the finest standing examples of post-medieval domestic architecture in America. Parson Capen, a young Harvard graduate from Dorchester, was called to the ministry at Topsfield in 1682. Shortly thereafter, he married Priscilla Appleton, daughter of one of the wealthiest and most prominent citizens of nearby Ipswich. The house was built, possibly with funds from Priscilla's dowry, on a 12 acre parcel of land granted to the Parson by the town. He served his congregation for forty years, including the period of the Salem Witchcraft Delusion, in which Topsfield was actively involved. He died in 1725 and is buried in nearby Pine Grove Cemetery alongside his wife. The house was acquired by the Historical Society in 1913, and is designated a National Historic Landmark. It is included as a site on the Essex National Heritage Area "Early Settlement Trail".

*Disabled visitors to the house can be accommodated by calling 508.887.3998 in advance of the visit.*



## Captain Joseph Gould Barn

(c1710)

The Captain Joseph Gould Barn which now stands adjacent to the Capen house was constructed in Topsfield sometime around 1710, on a site roughly a mile from its present location. It is one of perhaps a half-dozen known first period New England Barns, and is a rare survivor reflecting the agrarian roots of New England's original settlers. The barn, which is called by historians a "side-door English" type, comprises four bays constructed of heavy, hewn timbers joined by a variety of mortise and tenon joints. The large door on the facade enabled a loaded grain wagon to deliver its contents to the threshing floor. The barn was given to the society in 1983, with a view towards its preservation. After careful study, it was dismantled, and in 1995, after conservation, was moved to, and re-erected on its present site. In conjunction with the Capen house, the barn makes an important contribution to the understanding and interpretation of early life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

*The barn is handicapped accessible.  
For information on renting the barn for private functions,  
call 508.887.9724.*