

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0678619

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 6 1979 JUN 15 1979  
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Pequotsepos Manor

*(Denison Homestead)*

AND/OR COMMON

Denison Homestead

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Pequotsepos Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mystic

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd-Christopher Dodd

STATE

Connecticut

VICINITY OF

CODE

09

COUNTY

New London

CODE

011

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE *(cell only)*
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Denison Society c/o Mrs. Dorothy Stewart ✓

STREET & NUMBER

Box 145, RD 1, North Stonington, CT 06359

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Stonington Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Elm Street

CITY, TOWN

Stonington

STATE

Connecticut

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Census of Old Buildings W.P.A. Federal Writers' Project

DATE

1937

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Library of Connecticut, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Ct.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Denison Homestead, also known as Pequotsepos Manor, is located on Pequotsepos Road in Old Mystic, Connecticut, approximately a quarter of a mile east of Route 27. The two-story central chimney house was built in 1717 by George Denison, a descendant of one of the four original settlers of Stonington, Captain George Denison. The house is sided with shakes and is presently run as a museum by the Denison Society, a family association.

An earlier house on the site, Captain George Denison's second on the site, burned just prior to his relative George's marriage. The appearance of the first home is unknown, while the Captain's second house was most likely a two story structure, described as his "mansion" by the Captain. Both of these early houses were fortified against Indian attack. Thus, the present Denison homestead is the third house on the site, built appropriately by the third generation of Denisons in Stonington. It is said some of the planks and timbers from the second house were used in the construction of the present Denison Homestead.

The house faces south on a rocky rise of land and is built directly atop a rock ledge. Consequently, only a portion of the cellar is excavated, beneath the southeast corner. The facade follows a standard nine window plan, centered with a rough-hewn six panel door. The single leaf door, c. 1800, retains its original hardware of three long straphinges and an ingenious combination latch/knocker. (See photo 3) A transom with five lights tops the door. There is a second entrance along the east wall. This opens onto a small rear chamber, once used as a bedroom and now functioning as a reception area for the museum. C. 1800, a one-story ell was added at the northwest corner. This ell, intended as a summer kitchen, was raised to a full two stories in the twentieth century. Sash throughout are twelve over twelve. Outside sash framing, shakes and roof shingles are modern but the remainder of the framing dates from the eighteenth century.

The interior of the house retains most of its original detail. The central entry illustrates the somewhat crude attempts of the colonial craftsman to be stylish. While rather rough, the turned balusters and pendants of the stairwell are nonetheless handsome. The staircase has two landings and a three-quarter turn. Similarly simple finishing can be seen in the southeast chamber on the second floor. Here, the summer beam, running north-south, is uncased and crudely chamfered, as are the flared corner posts. The south plate is exposed. There is no fireplace panelling and the mantel appears to be a later addition, c. 1800. Floorboards here are approximately two feet wide. In the kitchen is an example of a trimmer arch, said to exist only in houses built along the coast from Hingham, Massachusetts to Stonington, Connecticut.<sup>1</sup>

In both front chambers on the first floor there are paired cased summer beams, running east and west. The corner posts are cased as are the girts. In the southwest chamber, the fireplace wall is simply panelled. A heavy collection molding surrounds the square brick fireplace. Similar panelling and fireplace treatment can be noted in the southwest chamber on the second

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Family History
	Criteria: B, C			Preservation Techniques

SPECIFIC DATES 1717

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Denison Homestead is a well maintained 1717 shingled house which preserves the way of life of succeeding generations of the descendants of one of Stonington's founders, Captain George Denison. From the time of its construction up to the present day, the house has been owned by Denisons. From 1654 to 1941, Denisons have lived on the site. Presently run as a museum, the house is entirely furnished with heirlooms accumulated over the years by the Denison family. In addition, the house was the last major restoration commission of Connecticut architect and author of Early Domestic Architecture in Connecticut, J. Frederick Kelly. The house is architecturally modest but nonetheless exhibits a level of craftsmanship evocative of its long and useful life.

Captain George Denison came to Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1631. He returned to England ten years later to fight for Cromwell, was wounded and married his nurse an Irishwoman, Ann Borodell. On his return to America, in 1651, he settled in New London, where he became Captain of the Train Band, or Militia. In 1654, he was granted 200 acres of land in reward for his services to the community. On these 200 acres, in what is now Stonington, Captain George built his home. His was one of only four English families living between the Thames and Pawcatuck Rivers. Captain George later fought in King Philip's War and was involved in the capture and execution of Canonchet, Philip's lieutenant.

In 1717, after the Captain's second home burned, his relative, also George, built the present Denison Homestead. Originally, this house was a story-and-a-half, but c. 1800, the roof was raised to a full two stories and a summer kitchen ell added. It is said that Indian slaves kept by the Denisons lived in the eaves of the house.

The house passed through eleven generations of the Denison family without a break until it was left as a museum to the Denison Society by the last owner, Mrs. Ann Borodell Denison Gates, in 1941. J. Frederick Kelly conceived the idea of a "successive" restoration which would utilize the wealth of furnishings and artifacts the family had accumulated and which would illustrate, via period rooms, the lifestyles of several generations. Thus, the kitchen, with its rare trimmer arch, appears as it would have in 1717. The southeast chamber illustrates Mrs. Gates' turn of the century parlor, while the southwest chamber is furnished as a Federal period drawing room. Upstairs, in the southeast corner, is a Revolutionary War period bedroom. The opposite bedroom is furnished with mid-19th century pieces, including a massive mahogany sleighbed.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Haynes, William, CAPTAIN GEORGE AND LADY ANN: THE DENISONS OF PEQUOTSE POS MANOR° The Denison Society, Inc., The Pequot Press, Stonington, Ct. 1963

Haynes, William, ELEVEN GENERATIONS OF LIFE IN CONNECTICUT, appeared in November, 1948, Antiquarian and Landmarks Society "Newsletter", Vol. 11, number 3.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8.3  
 QUADRANGLE NAME Mystic Quadrangle QUADRANGLE SCALE 1: 24000

UTM REFERENCES 380 020

A	<u>19</u>	<u>253640</u>	<u>4583040</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**


NAME / TITLE Sarah J. Zimmerman, Consultant  
 ORGANIZATION Connecticut Historical Commission DATE October 1978  
 STREET & NUMBER 59 South Prospect Street TELEPHONE 203 566-3005  
 CITY OR TOWN Hartford STATE Connecticut

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

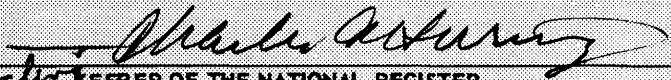

NATIONAL      STATE      LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE   
 TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission DATE February 23, 1979

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

 DATE 6/12/79  
 ACTING KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 ATTEST:  DATE 6/13/79  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED	MAR 6	1979
DATE ENTERED	JUN 15 1979	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

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State Register of Historic Places  
1979 State  
Connecticut Historical Commission  
59 South Prospect St., Hartford, Ct.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET Denison Homestead ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Thus, the house provides a graphic record of one family's long history. It preserves the way of life of succeeding generations of Denisons and illustrates the evolution of one structure over the years.

<sup>1</sup>Haynes, William, ELEVEN GENERATIONS OF LIFE IN CONNECTICUT<sup>o</sup> November 1948, Antiquarian and Landmarks Society "Newsletter", Vol. 11, number 3. A trimmer arch, built out from above the kitchen hearth, supports the hearthstone on the second floor.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Denison Homestead ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

floor, directly above. This panelling and the mantels throughout the rest of the house date c. 1800, indicating a major interior renovation at the time of the addition of the summer kitchen. It would seem that the raising of the rear wall to a full two stories from its former saltbox configuration occurred at the same time. Mortises for the original rafters of the lean-to can be seen in the northwest rear chamber of the second floor.

The house is entirely furnished with pieces accumulated over the years by succeeding generations of Denisons. Each room illustrates a different period in the house's evolution and is decorated with furniture of the appropriate period. In 1941, on the death of Ann Borodell Denison Gates, the last of eleven generations of Denisons to live in the homestead, the house became a museum. Restoration work was done by J. Frederick Kelly with interior decoration by Mrs. R.T. H. Halsey.

Also included on the property is a small barn with a pent roof and sided with shakes. A portion of the barn dates from the 18th-century, although several additions have been built on. Modern garage doors replace the original doors.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 12 1979
DATE ENTERED JUN 15 79

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Pequotsepos Manor (Denison Homestead)  
Mystic, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Volume 8, page 26, Stonington Land Records; also, approx. 1 acre  
opposite Homestead, on which Barn stands.

Acreage of Nominated Property: approx. 9.3; Mystic Quadrangle (1:24000)