

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

13000528

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Whitfield Cowles House

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 118 Spoonville Road not for publication

city of town East Granby vicinity

State Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06026

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Stacey Vairo
Signature of certifying official/

3.26.14
Date

Deputy State Historic Pres. Officer
Title

CT SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper
for [Signature]

Date of Action
4/8/14

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal
- private

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- building(s)
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling
- Industry: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Colonial: Georgian
- Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: Stone
- walls: Wood
- roof: Asphalt
- other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheet(s).

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet(s).

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Commerce
- Industry

Period of Significance

c. 1811 - c. 1846

Significant Dates

c. 1785, c. 1811, c. 1860, c. 1903

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

See continuation sheet(s)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

See continuation sheet(s).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

See continuation sheet(s).

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See continuation sheet(s).

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

See continuation sheet(s).

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheet(s).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheet(s).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.75
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

A. 18 686972 4641299
Zone Easting Northing

C. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

B. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

D. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

Additional UTM References on continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

See continuation sheet(s).

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

See continuation sheet(s).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lucas A. Karmazinas, Consultant
organization FuturePast Preservation date 2/23/2012
street & number 940 West Boulevard telephone 860-429-7982
city or town Hartford state CT zip code 06105
e-mail FuturePastPreservation@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional Items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Whitfield Cowles House

City or Vicinity: East Granby

County: Hartford

State: Connecticut

Photographer: Lucas A. Karmazinas

Date Photographed: 2/10/2011 and 5/11/2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: See continuation sheet(s).

1 of 20.

South (front) and west (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing main block, c. 1785.
Camera facing northeast.

2 of 20.

Interior of cellar, showing foundation detail.
Camera facing northeast.

3 of 20.

South (front) and west (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing window, window surround, trim, cornice, and porch details.
Camera facing northeast.

4 of 20.

North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from "Old County Highway", showing trim and cornice details.
Camera facing southwest.

5 of 20.

East (side) gable end of house from the "Old County Highway", showing molded rakeboards.
Camera facing northwest.

6 of 20.

South (front) elevation of house from Spoonville Road, showing entry details.
Camera facing northeast.

7 of 20.

South (front) and east (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing side porch details.
Camera facing northwest.

8 of 20.

North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from the "Old County Highway", rear lean-to details.
Camera facing southwest.

9 of 20.

South (front) and west (side) elevations of side ell, showing window, window surround, trim, and cornice details.
Camera facing northeast.

10 of 20.

Interior of central hall, showing cellar access door details.
Camera facing southeast.

11 of 20.

Interior of cellar, showing first-floor framing and floorboard details.
Camera facing east.

12 of 20.

Interior of central hall, showing stair, rail, and baluster details.
Camera facing northeast.

13 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen, showing wall, rail, and door details.
Camera facing southwest.

14 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen, showing fireplace and oven details.
Camera facing southeast.

15 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen and dining room, showing enlarged entry details.
Camera facing southeast.

16 of 20.

Interior of northeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing southeast.

17 of 20.

Interior of second-floor southeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing northwest.

18 of 20.

Interior of second-floor hall, showing attic access door details.

Camera facing northeast.

19 of 20.

Interior of attic, showing rafter, purlin, brace, and roof sheathing details.

Camera facing southwest.

20 of 20.

Windsor-style chair received by Whitfield Cowles upon his graduation from Yale in 1788.

Camera facing southwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Architectural Description: Whitfield Cowles House

The Whitfield Cowles House, erected circa 1785, sits on the north side of Spoonville Road, less than one-tenth of a mile east of its intersection with South Main Street (Connecticut Route 187), and three-tenths of a mile north of the Farmington River, in East Granby, Connecticut. The residence is located on the west side of an abandoned section of the "Old County Highway" or "East Granby Road", a Colonial thoroughfare which branched off of the old Granby Turnpike (currently Connecticut Route 189) in Bloomfield. The road bridged the Farmington River just south of the property, and then ran north through the center of East Granby and on into Massachusetts.¹ A small stream, located approximately 100 feet west of the house, runs due south and eventually flows into the Farmington River. The home is a two-story central hall Georgian-style frame house with a side-gabled roof and twin chimneys (Photograph 1). It is situated on a small knoll at the edge of a wooded three-and-three-quarter-acre lot. This section of East Granby, once commonly referred to as "Spoonville", remained largely rural until the second half of the twentieth century, however over the course of the last 50 years suburban development has steadily reshaped the area's character. While several eighteenth and nineteenth-century farmsteads remain as testaments to the area's former agricultural utility, its current use is primarily residential. Likewise, while various barns and other outbuildings once dotted the Cowles property, these were lost to local highway redevelopment following the devastating 1955 flood, and to a small forest of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees which slowly reclaimed the abandoned farmland.

The Whitfield Cowles House consists of a two-story main block measuring 40 feet by 36 feet. The residence faces south, towards Spoonville Road, and the five bays of the façade are spaced in a two-one-two arrangement. The home's foundation and chimneystack bases are fieldstone laid up dry in irregular course with dry-laid cut stone capping the former (Photograph 2). The exterior walls are sheathed in clapboards fastened four inches to the weather with cut nails. Simple wood corner boards and window surrounds frame the sheathing (Photograph 3). The façade fenestration consists of 9/1 double-hung sash on the first floor and 6/1 double-hung sash on the second. Fenestration throughout the remainder of the main block largely mimics this pattern, however there is a modern 8/8 double-hung window on the second floor of the north (rear) elevation and the windows on the east and west (side) elevations are 6/6 double-hung sash.² The front elevation of the main block has a dentiled cornice with shallow returns. The rear elevation has a similar cornice yet lacks a dentil course as found on the façade (Photograph 4). The side elevations have molded rake boards (Photograph 5).

The façade of the Whitfield Cowles House is dominated by a large full-height porch. This feature is not original to the home and photographic documentation suggests that it was likely added by the Cowles family around 1903.³ The porch is a feature common of the Colonial Revival style and its addition reflects the common practice of adding fashionable architectural details to older residences in order to better reflect contemporary building patterns. The two-story porch is centered on the façade and is approximately 24 feet wide and nine feet deep. It is supported by four fluted Doric columns and has a simple entablature with a narrow frieze and denticulated cornice, the latter being identical to that applied to the facade. The porch has a shallow hipped roof. There is a balcony supported by the two interior porch columns over the entry. This is supported by the two center columns of the

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main porch. The primary entrance to the home is framed by a simple door surround. The paneled entry door is flanked by rectangular multi-pane sidelights and there is a four-light transom above (Photograph 6).

A full-width one-story porch was added to the east elevation concurrent to the construction of the front porch (Photograph 7). The details of the side porch replicate those on the façade and, as such, also include a balustrade, five fluted Doric columns, a narrow frieze, and denticulated cornice. The porch extends beyond the front plane of the building and its quarter-round southern end is suggestive of a wrap-around porch that was not completed. The side veranda does, however, continue onto the front porch despite the fact that its roof does not continue around the front of the building.

There is a one-and-a-half-story lean-to addition, measuring 20 feet by 10 feet, on the western side of the north (rear) elevation. A side ell consisting of two two-story blocks, measuring 18 feet by 20 feet and 22 feet by 20 feet, respectively is located on the west side of the main block (Photograph 8, Photograph 9). The lean-to houses a small staircase leading from the first to the second floor, as well as one small room on each level. The smaller of the two secondary blocks contains a modern kitchen on the first floor and a workshop above. The final block is an attached post-and-beam barn with an arched opening on the first level and an unfinished storage area on the second floor. Both of the secondary blocks are visible in turn-of-the-century photographs of the home and architectural analysis completed by Willard Restoration of Wethersfield, Connecticut in September 2010 places the date of construction for the barn at circa 1870. The lean-to was likely added well before this date, perhaps not long after Whitfield Cowles acquired the house in 1802. Primary source documents in the owner's collection indicate work being done on the rear of the home in 1813, perhaps suggestive of the period in which the lean-to was constructed. Like the home's primary block, the lean-to and side ell are sheathed in clapboards. They also have wood corner boards and simple cornices. The fenestration of the secondary blocks consists of 6/6 double-hung sash.

The plan and interior details of the main block are typical of homes from the period (See Floor Plans). The living spaces on both floors flank a central hall and are arranged front-to-rear around the twin chimneystacks, which support four fireplaces, all on the first floor. The first-floor plan of the main block includes the central hall, two parlors, a dining room, and the original kitchen. The second floor plan consists of the central hall and four chambers. A set of stairs on the west side of the upstairs corridor leads to the unfinished attic. Interior finishes throughout the two main floors of the home include plaster ceilings and walls, wide as well as matched board flooring, and a mix of late-eighteenth and early-twentieth century molding and doors.

The cellar of the Whitfield Cowles House is accessed via a small batten door located in the central hall between the two northern chambers on the first floor (Photograph 10). A concrete floor has been poured under the eastern half of the house, however, due to the presence of a stone ledge a portion of the west side retains its original dirt floor. The first floor framing members remain exposed and appear to all be original (Photograph 11). As previously noted, the foundation and chimneystack bases are fieldstone laid up dry while the oak sills rest upon cut stone, also laid up dry.

The details of the entry, including multi-pane sidelights and transom, date to the circa 1903 façade alteration. The straight-run stair to the second floor is located on the east side of the central hall (Photograph 12). Due to the nine-foot ceilings on the first floor the stair is a long-run arrangement. It has square balusters and plain handrail, which terminates in a turned newel post. Like the entry,

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the southeast and southwest parlors experienced several alterations during the addition of the front porch in 1903. The most significant was the lengthening of the window openings on the façade and side elevations and the installation of new sash. Despite this change, however, it appears that the original window trim was not replaced, but was rather simply extended downward to accommodate the change. The remaining additions to these formal spaces were primarily superficial. These included the installation of four-panel entry and pass-through doors with butt hinges and ceramic doorknobs, and the addition of plain mopboards. Surviving original details in the southeast parlor include the chamber's wide board floors, fireplace surround, stone hearth and lintel, beaded post casings, and six-panel doors with iron latches. The southwest parlor likewise retains its wide board floors and brick fireplace with crane, however the post casings and fireplace surround have been altered.

The rear section of the central hall leads into the original kitchen, located in the northwestern corner of the main block. The walls and ceiling of the kitchen are wet plaster and there is a molded chair rail throughout the room (Photograph 13). Wood strip flooring has been laid over the original wide board floor. The kitchen fireplace retains its original crane and stone hearth and there is a beehive oven to the left of the firebox. Below this is a small storage area with flush bead door (Photograph 14). Adjacent to the kitchen, situated in the northeast corner of the main block, is a space likely employed as the original dining room (Photograph 15). Similar to the kitchen, this room retains its wet plaster ceiling and walls, however wood strip flooring has likewise been laid over the floorboards. The original door opening has been widened and turned posts and wood brackets have recently been added as decorative details. A cast iron stove has been installed and a screen placed in front of the fireplace opening. Despite these alterations, however, the chamber retains its raised six-panel doors with iron Norfolk latches and butt hinges (Photograph 16).

The four primary chambers on the second floor of the house retain the majority of their late-eighteenth century details. These include wet plaster walls and ceilings; wide board floors; beaded post casings; eight-inch mopboards with molded tops; chair rails at window sill height (33 5/8"); and six-panel doors with raised panels, elongated quarter-round molded edges on the rails and stiles, butt hinges, iron Norfolk latches, and casings with applied band molding (Photograph 17).

A narrow batten door on the east side of the second-floor corridor leads to an unfinished attic. The door is fastened with rosehead nails driven through the battens and clinched on the beaded sheathing side (Photograph 18). As expected, the Cowles House employs oak post-and-beam construction, the arrangement of which is clearly visible in the attic (Photograph 19). Typical of residences built in Connecticut during the late eighteenth century, the framing is primarily hewn, while secondary timbers and sheathing display up-and-down saw marks. The rafter-and-purlin system is supported by heavy queen posts, which in turn have diagonal braces pegged to the girts. The horizontal purlins appear to be of continuous lengths. The rafters are partially dressed and many retain much of their original bark. Except for the chimney rafters, which are spaced 30" center, the rafters are spaced 39" on center and their peaks are pegged. The front of the home retains its wide roof sheathing boards, however those on the rear of the house have been replaced with pine boards from a local mill.

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¹ South Main Street follows the route of the Old County Highway north of its intersection with Hatchet Hill Road (approximately one mile north of the Whitfield Cowles House), however the route south to the Farmington River now swings approximately two-tenths of a mile west of the Colonial highway. Spoonville Road splits directly in front of the residence with one branch running south towards the Farmington River, likely along the original highway roadbed.

² These were likely added shortly after the house was constructed as similar windows are not present on the west side of the house and interior analysis indicates that it was necessary to notch into the third-floor end girt to install the window frames.

³ A photograph provided by the owners and taken by the Cowles family circa 1902, just before the addition of the full-height porch, shows that the home originally had a small portico supported by two fluted Doric columns.

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Significance: Whitfield Cowles House

Summary

The Whitfield Cowles House, located in East Granby, Connecticut, is significant because of the important role the Cowles family played in the development of a number of nascent manufacturing entities located in the Farmington River Valley, the most important of these being devoted to the production of silver-plated wares (Criterion A). William Brown Cowles (1813-1887), son of the Reverend Whitfield Cowles (1764-1840), pioneered the domestic use of electroplating in the production of silverware, an industry in which Connecticut would rise to national prominence during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Although Cowles's own small shop failed to turn long-term profits, it served as a springboard for a number of notable and prosperous manufacturers, including the Rogers Brothers Company, one of the founding partner firms within the nationally-prominent International Silver Company, originally of Meriden, Connecticut. Currently inhabited by a seventh consecutive generation of the Cowles family, the Whitfield Cowles House represents a fine example of Georgian-style Colonial architecture unusually well-preserved in its overall configuration and finishes (Criterion C). The Colonial Revival alterations to the façade and east elevation are typical of early twentieth-century treatments to eighteenth-century homes and since they have sympathetically graced the home for over 110 years have attained historical significance in their own right.

Historical Significance

Turkey Hills

Originally, the majority of the land that now comprises the town of East Granby, Connecticut was included in a disparate western settlement of the town of Windsor. Known to the Native Americans as "Massaco", this area was incorporated as the town of Simsbury in 1670 after developing a sizable population of its own. While the population of Simsbury steadily grew following its incorporation, the majority of the town's residents were concentrated on the west side of town. Lands to the east, over Peak Mountain, were not granted until the late 1680s. Twenty-three parcels were eventually granted in 1688, however settlement along the eastern fringes of town, known then as Turkey Hills, did not take place in earnest until between 1707 and 1712.

As settlers trickled into Turkey Hills over the course of the following years, a growing contingent of residents in the area called for the creation of their own ecclesiastical society. Citing the difficulties inherent in attending church services over the mountain in the Simsbury meetinghouse, residents of Turkey Hills petitioned for increased ecclesiastical freedom from Simsbury in 1729, 1732, 1733, and again in 1735. Finally, in 1736, after recognizing the implications of population growth in Simsbury, the Connecticut General Assembly declared Turkey Hills one of a number of separate ecclesiastical societies within the town. The newly

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created Ecclesiastical Society of Turkey Hills was bounded by the towns of Windsor and Suffield to the east, the Farmington River to the south, the Ecclesiastical Society of Salmon Brook (another section of Simsbury) to the west, and the town of Suffield to the north. These, roughly, were the same boundaries that delineated the town of East Granby when it was finally incorporated in June 1858.

Reverend Whitfield Cowles

The Ecclesiastical Society of Turkey Hills had been established for a scant 28 years when a new pastor, the Reverend Whitfield Cowles arrived to assume his duties. Born June 3, 1764, in Southington Connecticut, the young Whitfield Cowles' commenced studies with his pastor at the age of sixteen. In 1786, he was accepted by the Yale College church, and by 1788, he had graduated from the college. After graduation, Cowles stayed on at Yale, completing his education with a Master of Arts degree in 1793. On June 18, 1794, at the age of thirty, he was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church in Turkey Hills.¹

The early years of Cowles' tenure appear to have been peaceful and the pastor well received. A history of the Cowles family noted that,

Mr. Cowles was a large, fleshy man, full of life and much given to pleasantry. As a preacher he was popular, and was always heard gladly in his native town. He was emotional rather than logical. His kindred and early companion always warmly espoused his cause and never lost faith in his integrity.²

Despite his academic credentials and personal charisma, Whitfield Cowles shortly revealed himself to be less penny-wise than his congregation might have appreciated. Upon his hiring, Cowles negotiated an annual salary of £86. If the payment was not paid in a timely manner he also negotiated to receive interest on the payment; a minor action that perhaps hinted at an interest in financial and worldly affairs (and which might be viewed as inappropriate for a minister). In 1802, Cowles purchased the homestead of Joseph Griswold Jr., a property which included seventy-five acres and the house currently identified as 118 Spoonville Road. The \$1,000 Cowles paid for the property supports the argument that a substantial residence was already present on the parcel, this likely constructed by Griswold shortly after he purchased the property in 1784. During his tenure as pastor of the Congregational Church in Turkey Hills, Reverend Cowles also owned two or three other houses, which he maintained as rental properties. These were located approximately three miles north of the Cowles homestead on School Street; and two-tenths of a mile south, along the Old County Highway, what is now recognized as Tunxis Avenue. In addition to these residences, Cowles also owned and operated a distillery and cider mill, particularly interesting ventures for a man of the cloth.³

Reverend Cowles's spending, however, did not come without its own price. A shifting religious atmosphere was undermining the Congregationalist Church's tax monopoly in Connecticut, as citizens were increasingly given the opportunity to support other religious organizations during the late eighteenth century. As early as 1794, the Turkey Hills Ecclesiastical Society had been forced to

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solicit additional voluntary contributions from its congregation in order to make up for the lost revenues. By 1804, such contributions became the sole source of community-based income included in Cowles's salary since he personally disapproved of government involvement in the Church and of mandatory ecclesiastical taxation. Cowles genuinely believed in the goodwill and charity of his parish and felt that their donations would be more than adequate to support his position. He was sorely mistaken. By 1806, the Turkey Hills Ecclesiastical Society was in such dire financial condition that they were forced to pursue legal action against delinquent donors in order to raise adequate funds for the ministry. Such desperate measures proved to be legally untenable and Cowles sought other sources of income to support his growing family.⁴

Much to his parishioners' chagrin, Whitfield Cowles increasingly grew into an active trader and soon opened a small shop in his house on School Street. Furthermore, Cowles had developed into a prolific *producer* of the very goods that he traded. From his home at 118 Spoonville Road, Reverend Cowles is rumored to have produced a wide variety of such goods. A room "above the woodshed" at the house at 118 Spoonville, referred to as "the broom shop", is believed to be where he assembled brooms and tin candle ware for sale. He was also active in the production of cider brandy, likely taking advantage of the distillery he assumed when he purchased the property. According to critics in the parish, Cowles also bred and butchered hogs for shipment and sale as far away as New York, allegedly even performing such tasks on the Sabbath.⁵

Coupled with his frustrating secular pursuits, Cowles was also considered to be a political maverick within his ministry. In an arena of staunch Federalist sympathy, Cowles was an uncompromising Democratic-Republican. His Jeffersonian politics turned many in his Society against him as a result of the unstable political environment that was Connecticut during the early nineteenth century. An August 4, 1803 issue of the Hartford, Connecticut newspaper *American Mercury* made a lengthy comment on the subject that specifically mentioned Cowles' experiences during this period. The paper noted,

No sooner is a clergyman known to be a Republican (although he preaches no politics on a Sunday, or on Fast and Thanksgiving days,) than Federalists are immediately up in arms against him. Plots and schemes are set on foot – his ruin is decreed – as he is proclaimed an infidel – no vice is too low to be falsely ascribed to him: attempts are eagerly made to oust him from his place or silence him, at any rate to render his life uncomfortable. If, however, he rise superior to their machinations, then their way is to neglect his ministrations, forsake God's house and worship, and even change their religion to accomplish pious views... Mr. Cowles of Granby has experienced treatment from his federal parishioners similar to the foregoing. After endeavoring to make all the trouble in their power, several have changed their religion and gone off! And all this without any conceivable reason but that Mr. Cowles is a Republican.⁶

By 1808, such rivals had trumped up enough charges to bring Cowles before the North Consociation of Hartford County, the Congregational Church's governing and administrative body for northern Connecticut churches. The thirteen charges presented were flimsy at best and before the trial could even begin two were combined and two withdrawn. Cowles was eventually acquitted of six

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charges but still was found guilty of three, including allegations that he had transported brandy cider to Vermont, traveling thirty miles on the Sabbath without any necessity to do so; that he had fraudulently sold "soft, ill-fattened and unfit" pork to a widow of the parish; and that through a "profane" and "disorderly" demeanor had discredited his parish and driven members of his congregation towards other churches. As punishment Cowles was dismissed from the Congregational ministry with a caveat stating he could be reinstated should he, "show a sincere repentance", for the error of his ways.⁷

Cowles' dismissal proved to be highly controversial among members of his parish. Prior to the reverend's trial, his congregation voted unanimously that he should retain his position. Furthermore, following his removal, a faction within East Granby voted to reject his dismissal and to "withdraw the local church" from the formal Congregational organization on the grounds that the Consociation had gone too far. It is a testament to Cowles's reputation, as well as his influence within the region, that his removal would effectively cripple the ecclesiastical functionality of the area for many years to come. As a last resort, in February of 1810, Cowles attempted to appeal the decision of his dismissal, asking for "forgiveness for his faults, so far as he felt conscious of guilt." The appeal was roundly rejected, his peers finding his penance to be insufficient. By 1812, Cowles had been effectively excommunicated from the Congregational Church on grounds that, "a minister dismissed from his pastoral relations ceases to be a member of the church of which he was the late pastor."⁸

Freed from the burdens of ministry, Cowles did not remain idle. Instead he devoted himself to his economic and industrial pursuits. The earliest of Cowles' efforts are alleged to include the production of cotton cloth, perhaps the earliest in the area, and the distillation of peppermint. By 1811, a mere three years after his dismissal as minister, he had started producing hand and machine cards for the carding of wool from his residence at 118 Spoonville Road, selling them as far away as Maryland.⁹ Seeking to diversify, in 1812 Cowles partnered with Arthur Griswold and Charles W. Mills, a pair of local manufacturers who had recently acquired the Jeremiah Case mills in Tariffville, then known as Griswoldville. When Cowles joined the partnership the Griswold Mills boasted a near-complete clothier's business. While the business of spinning and weaving cloth was still done in-home, the factory machinery included carding machines, a fulling mill, dye house, and finishing shop.

Looking to further expand their business, the partners also constructed a wire mill early in 1812. In addition to the metal staples used in the cards, the mill produced a variety of "American wire of superior quality in all sizes from 1 to 34", as well as "refuse wire suitable for horse chains." Between February and October of 1812 the company produced 7425 pounds of wire, and between 1812 and 1815 the company employed at least 38 men and women, each paid between \$5 and \$25 per month. After initial success and a clientele located as far away as Albany, New York and Rutland, Vermont, the, "typical financial difficulties of the time", began to weigh upon the Griswoldville mills. Investors came and went with alarming frequency and creditors were soon calling upon the partners. In 1813, the recently renamed Cowles, Lincoln, and Mills Company relocated their card factory to Hartford and by 1815 Cowles had dropped out of the business, this only after having to sell approximately 40 acres of his own land to settle his debts of around \$2,300.¹⁰

Whitfield Cowles, however, was not the type to be discouraged. After departing the Griswoldville venture he persisted in the manufacturing of wool cards and wire in a modest factory constructed on Spoonville Road not far from his house. By 1829, Cowles

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had once again moved to expand his business. He constructed another new factory, this one located "near the Farmington River, north, a few hundred rods east of the Scotland (Spoonville) Bridge." The new mill was two stories high with a full basement, 25 windows, and four doors. The factory took advantage of the small stream that runs past the Cowles homestead, drawing power from it via a small overshot waterwheel. By 1832, Cowles's company had assumed the title of "Whitfield Cowles and Sons", after Cowles's sons, Madison and Gilbert, joined the business. In 1833, now approaching the age of 70, Whitfield deeded the business to Gilbert and Madison. Three years later, following Madison's death, Gilbert sold his share to his other brother, William, who assumed primary control of the company.¹¹

Operations at Whitfield Cowles and Sons appear to have continued smoothly for the next four years. In 1840, however, a number of events ushered in a series of transitions for the Cowles family, and their manufacturing activities in East Granby. On November 19, 1840, Whitfield Cowles passed, reputedly from natural causes. Following his father's death, William B. Cowles assumed his father's house and business. It was at this time that he also discontinued production of wire and wool cards in favor of two his father's newest pursuits, the manufacture of German silver spoons, and experimentation with the newly emerging technology of electroplating.¹²

German silver, an alloy of copper, nickel and zinc, was swiftly replacing pewter as the prime choice for silverware by the middle of the nineteenth century. The alloy was tougher and brighter than pewter but could be manufactured relatively easily as it was adaptable to rolling. Far more importantly, however, German silver also lends itself well to the then state-of-the-art process of electroplating. Electroplating, perfected in England in 1839, was a process that used a cyanide solution, mixed with copper and zinc as electrical conductors, to cause pure silver to dissolve and reform upon a selected object. As German silver contained both copper and zinc, Whitfield Cowles and Sons stood perfectly poised to latch on to this stunning new technology.¹³

In 1843, William Cowles partnered with James H. Isaacson, an experienced silversmith, and Hartford silver manufacturers William and Asa Rogers, whom had been experimenting with electroplating in Hartford, to form "William B. Cowles & Co.", an entity devoted to the production of electroplated German silver products at Cowles's East Granby mill. The company soon constructed a second factory building located along the Farmington River and built a dam across to the eastern end of Pinney Island in order to furnish it with power. In November 1845, Cowles further partnered with John D. Johnson, another manufacturer of brass and German silver goods from Waterbury, Connecticut, thus forming the "Cowles Manufacturing Company", the intent of which being to produce electroplated silver goods of all kinds. As such, William B. Cowles & Co., and in turn the Cowles Manufacturing Company, became the first manufacturers of electroplated wares in the United States.¹⁴

Initially, the businesses were a remarkable success. Between 1845 and 1846, 98 men and 16 women worked on a variety of machinery which included the lathes, rolling mills, cutting dies, polishing frames, emery wheels, and grinding frames used for the manufacture of silverware, as well as all of the batteries, sinks, pots, baths, and wires required for the electroplating process. Due to the difficulty of finding workers experienced in the metal trades, very few of Cowles' employees were residents of Turkey Hills. Others traveled to the factory from neighboring towns, resided in the company's two-story boarding house, or built new homes near

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the factory. Examples of the latter include Thomas Cushman, a silversmith and book-keeper who built the home at 116 Spoonville Road in 1845, and laborer James B. Abbot, who built the residence at 153 Spoonville Road the same year.

Producing silver-plated goods of all varieties, from spoons to dishes, and even spectacles, the Cowles Manufacturing Company quickly blazed a trail that put them at the forefront of the silver-plating industry. In 1846, an article printed in the *New York Commercial* and *Hartford Courant* challenged readers to distinguish the Cowles Manufacturing Company's product from solid silver and stated that Cowles's goods were, "becoming celebrated throughout the country." Salesmen for the Cowles Manufacturing Company, including William B. Cowles himself, traveled as far south as South Carolina and as far west as Cleveland, Ohio pedaling the company's products. In its first year alone, the sales of silver-plated goods were valued at \$64,000, a notable figure for the time. The early success of the company was such that many in the public soon began to refer to the area around the factories as "Spoonville." These heady times of success, however, would prove very short lived.¹⁵

The initial profitability of the Cowles Manufacturing Company did not keep the business out of debt for long, and by the end of 1846 the original partners found themselves forced to mortgage their stakes in the company to pay off their debts. James H. Isaacson, the first of the founders to flee the foundering firm, fired off a letter of, "abject distress" to Asa Rogers following his departure. The correspondence cited the company's failing quality of workmanship as well as the even more pathetic financial situation in which it could presently be found. Speaking of the qualities of the company's spoons Isaacson wrote, "In a word a meaner lot of work, in the finish than is now in the factory could not be found in this country... It would be dangerous for any insect to run across them for it would get so deep into the cavities that it would be a chance of his getting out & I am positive that they would never be found in a decently dark day without they had been laid away to be found again, for there is not polish enough to reflect a particle of light." He concluded his lament, stating, "The work is so bad I have no hopes of it being sold, if packed up & I give everything up entirely until some system & responsibility can be had in the work." What made these comments even more damaging to the survival of the Cowles Manufacturing Company, however, was the increasing presence of competition.¹⁶

Silver-plating was radically new when Cowles Manufacturing Company adopted its use. As such, the company initially benefited from a complete domestic monopoly on the technology. Connecticut, however, was a state already rich with silverware manufacturers all too eager to latch on to the burgeoning, and highly profitable, silver-plating industry. In addition, many of these companies already benefited from far more favorable geographic locations than East Granby, these including industrial centers such as Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury. Such localities, connected to lines of communication and transportation, as well as being situated close to sources of raw materials and labor, allowed them to stay better connected with suppliers and customers, as well as to maintain lower operating costs. The Cowles Manufacturing Company's relatively isolated location complicated their distribution chain and stymied their ability to recruit, and maintain a skilled workforce. These factors ultimately impacted the quality of workmanship, the costs of production, and the affordability of their goods. Due to these critical factors, as the rest of the silverware industry rapidly caught up with Cowles's company technology the East Granby manufacturer was forced to the wall.¹⁷

The most damaging blow to Cowles came with the departure of Asa Rogers. One of Cowles's original partners, Rogers left the company at the same time as Isaacson. Unfortunately for Cowles, however, Rogers did not leave to pursue other ventures, but

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rather founded his own silver-plating business, partnering with his brother on State Street in Hartford the following year. The organization of "Rogers Brothers" in 1847 placed Cowles in direct competition with his former partner. The rivalry between the two quickly became bitter, with Cowles accusing Rogers of rumormongering, as well as slandering the quality of his products. By 1850, the Cowles Manufacturing Company was in dire financial straits and the partnership between Cowles and his brother-in-law, Addison Harger, could not stem the mounting debt. By the 1860s the company had fallen into obscurity.¹⁸

Just how long the Cowles Manufacturing Company continued to operate is unclear. While the company was not officially dissolved by the Connecticut legislature until 1905, historian William G. Snow notes that the company continued, "greatly handicapped by financial conditions", for at least five or six years after the departure of Asa Roberts. After the company eventually folded, yet before the mill along the Farmington River burned down some time between 1895 and 1897, the latter was occupied by a variety of textile manufacturers, including what were identified as "horse blanket factories" on an 1896 map. It is clear, however, that following the collapse of the Cowles Manufacturing Company, William B. Cowles returned to the business of farming. Likewise, succeeding generations of the Cowles family continued to draw their livelihood from the land until the middle of the twentieth century and remain in the house today. While most of the farm has been reclaimed by the forest or taken for the redevelopment of Route 187, the current family members are fortunate to retain the home of six generations of their forebears, a line which began with Whitfield Cowles's arrival in Turkey Hills in 1794.

Regardless of the ultimate fate of the Cowles Manufacturing Company, the firm's impact on the silver-plating industry was indelible. William B. Cowles was central to the founding of the first electroplating manufactory in the Western Hemisphere and, as such, he should be considered a pioneer in the trade. Although Cowles's company eventually failed, the legacy of the firm can be traced through the successes of men like Asa Rogers and Samuel Simpson, both of whom were trained in the craft of electroplating in Cowles's mill. While Rogers Brothers would eventually gain nationally recognition, Simpson rose to a central position within the Meriden Britannia Company, another notable Connecticut manufacturer of silver goods and britannia ware. The success of these two companies, as well as that of the International Silver Company, into which they were incorporated at the turn of the twentieth century, helped project Connecticut's silverware industry to a level of national prominence. Significantly, a piece published by the *Hartford Courant* during Connecticut's Tercentennial stated that, "In giving full credit to the various units of the International Silver Company that were concerned in the first successful production of silver-plated spoons, forks, etc., the importance of the work done by the Rogers brothers in Granby from 1843 to 1846 should not be overlooked. Modest in its origin and almost forgotten in the passage of the years, it was as a matter of fact of inestimable value." Thus, while unsuccessful in business himself, William B. Cowles laid the groundwork for a nationally celebrated industry that would thrive for decades to come.¹⁹

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Architectural Significance

The Whitfield Cowles House is a well-preserved example of typical Georgian-style residential construction, this with sympathetically executed Colonial Revival alterations. Many of the house's original features have been little changed since its construction in 1785, and the mass, shape, window and door opening arrangements, and central-hall plan are all in the standard tradition of Georgian-style architecture built throughout New England during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Notable exceptions to the aforementioned include the addition of the Neoclassical Revival style porches on the south and east elevations and alterations made to the main entry and façade windows. A historic photograph dated to c. 1902 shows the house before the work was completed and it is thought the changes took place shortly thereafter. While no additional information on the work exists, the date attributed to the former photograph suggests that it was the work of the third of the seven generations of the Cowles family to hold the property, this being William B. Cowles's son, Benjamin Cowles (1841-1910), a farmer, who at the time lived in the house along with five additional members of the Cowles family, three farmhands, and one servant.²⁰

As the aforementioned Neoclassical Revival alterations were completed around the turn of the twentieth century, they have since attained their own historical significance. The aesthetic similarities between architectural forms popular during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, including the Georgian, Early Classical Revival, and Greek Revival styles, and the Classical Revival style, the latter popular during the period in which the aforementioned modifications took place, made residences like the Whitfield Cowles House perfect templates for architectural "upgrading." It is not typical, however, that such changes compliment the character of the home as well as they do on the Whitfield Cowles House, nor is it common that the general plan and interior details of the home would be so well preserved. The two-story porch with large fluted columns and denticulated cornice give the home a distinctly Classical Revival feel, while the retention of the original plan, as well as door and window arrangement, maintain the home's Georgian integrity. Likewise, the addition of a side porch does not overwhelm the architectural focal points of the home but still provided the type of outdoor living space that were so common among the architectural styles popular at the time.

The ability of any home to adapt to the changing needs and stylistic preferences of seven generations of residents while still maintaining its grace and character is at times dependant upon the kind of architectural evolution visible in the house at 118 Spoonville Road. Having served for over 225 years as both a residence and as a hub for a variety of cottage industries, it is also notable to find such a substantial inventory of intact original details, including cellar and attic framing, wide board floors, door and window trim, paneled doors, fireplace surrounds and hearths, as well as various hardware as can be found in the Whitfield Cowles House. In addition, the owners' archive of Cowles family artifacts, dating from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, further enriches the historical experience that defines a visit to the home. This collection is comprised of hundreds of sermons drafted by Whitfield Cowles, original land records, as well as family correspondence. It also includes a variety of other artifacts related to the Cowles family, including an assortment of spoons produced by the Cowles Manufacturing Company and the Windsor-style chair that Whitfield Cowles received upon his graduation from Yale in 1788 (Photograph 20).

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National Park Service

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¹ Mary Jane Springman and Betty Finnell Guinan, *East Granby: The Evolution of a Connecticut Town*. (Canaan, NH: Phoenix, 1983), 28-31, 113; Calvin D. Cowles, *Genealogy of the Cowles Families in America*. (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1929), 190.

² Springman, 111.

³ Springman, 113; Cowles, 192.

⁴ Springman, 112.

⁵ Ibid, 113-114.

⁶ Ibid, 112-113.

⁷ Ibid, 113-114; Cowles, 191.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A large assortment of the wire staples and leather backing used to produce the cards, as well as a number of completed cards, were discovered by the current resident and are likely examples of those produced by Whitfield Cowles's mill. Two patent models of the machinery developed by Cowles to produce the wire staples are also in the owner's collection.

¹⁰ Springman, 164. W.G. Snow, "The Cowles Family in the Turkey Hills District." (Article prepared for the East Granby Tercentenary, September 22, 1935), 1-2.

¹¹ "Silver Spoon Making Once Granby Trade", *Hartford Courant*, June 22, 1935, pg. 2.; Springman, 164-165.

¹² Ibid, 165; Earl Chapin May, *Century of Silver, 1847-1947; Connecticut Yankees and a Noble Metal*. (New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1947), 23.

¹³ Springman, 165-166.

¹⁴ Springman, 165-166; Ellsworth S. Grant, *Yankee Dreamers and Doers*. (Chester, CT: Pequot, 1974), 163-165; L.P. Brockett and Henry Barnard. *Our Country's Wealth and Influence Shown by Tracing in Historical Form from Year to Year and Decade to Decade, from 1620 to 1880, the Rapid Increase of Population, and Progress in the Development of Our Resources*. (Hartford: L. Stebbins, 1882), 296; "Silver Spoon Making Once Granby Trade", *Hartford Courant*, June 22, 1935, pg. 2.

¹⁵ "Silver and Not Silver", *Hartford Courant*, October 9, 1846; Springman, 167-168; May, 23.

¹⁶ May, 26-27.

¹⁷ Springman, 170.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Grant, 167; "Silver Spoon Making Once Granby Trade", *Hartford Courant*, June 22, 1935, pg. 2.

²⁰ The members of the Cowles family in the house in 1900 included Benjamin Cowles; his wife, Jane; son, Roland W.; daughter-in-law, Grace; grandson, Roland W.; aunt Isabella Harger. The farmhands included John Scanlan, and Peter and Ignus Pawofky, the two latter men being Austro-Hungarian immigrants. The last resident in the house, a Mary Polaski, was an immigrant from Austria. The house would pass to the elder Roland W. Colwes upon Benjamin Cowles' death on November 3, 1910. U.S. Census Returns, 1900.

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Name of Property: Whitfield Cowles House

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Name of Property: Whitfield Cowles House

County and State: Hartford, CT

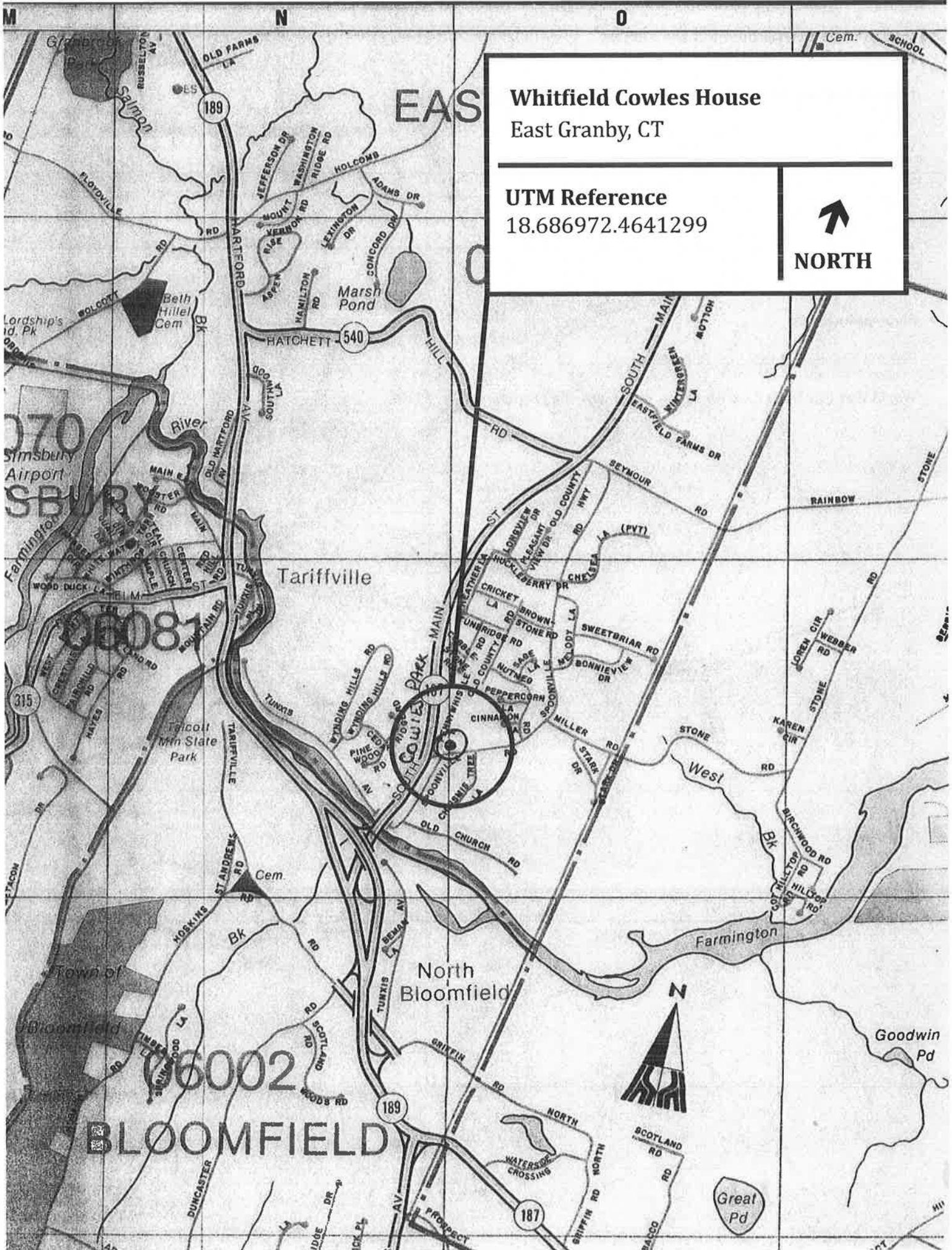
Section number: 9

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Federal Records:

Federal Census Records for 1800-1930.

World War One Draft Card for Rollin W. Cowles, filed September 12, 1918.



Whitfield Cowles House
East Granby, CT

UTM Reference
18.686972.4641299



NORTH

EAST GRANBY

TARIFFVILLE

North Bloomfield

Farmington

Goodwin Pd

Great Pd



06002
BLOOMFIELD

070
Simsbury Airport
SBB

081

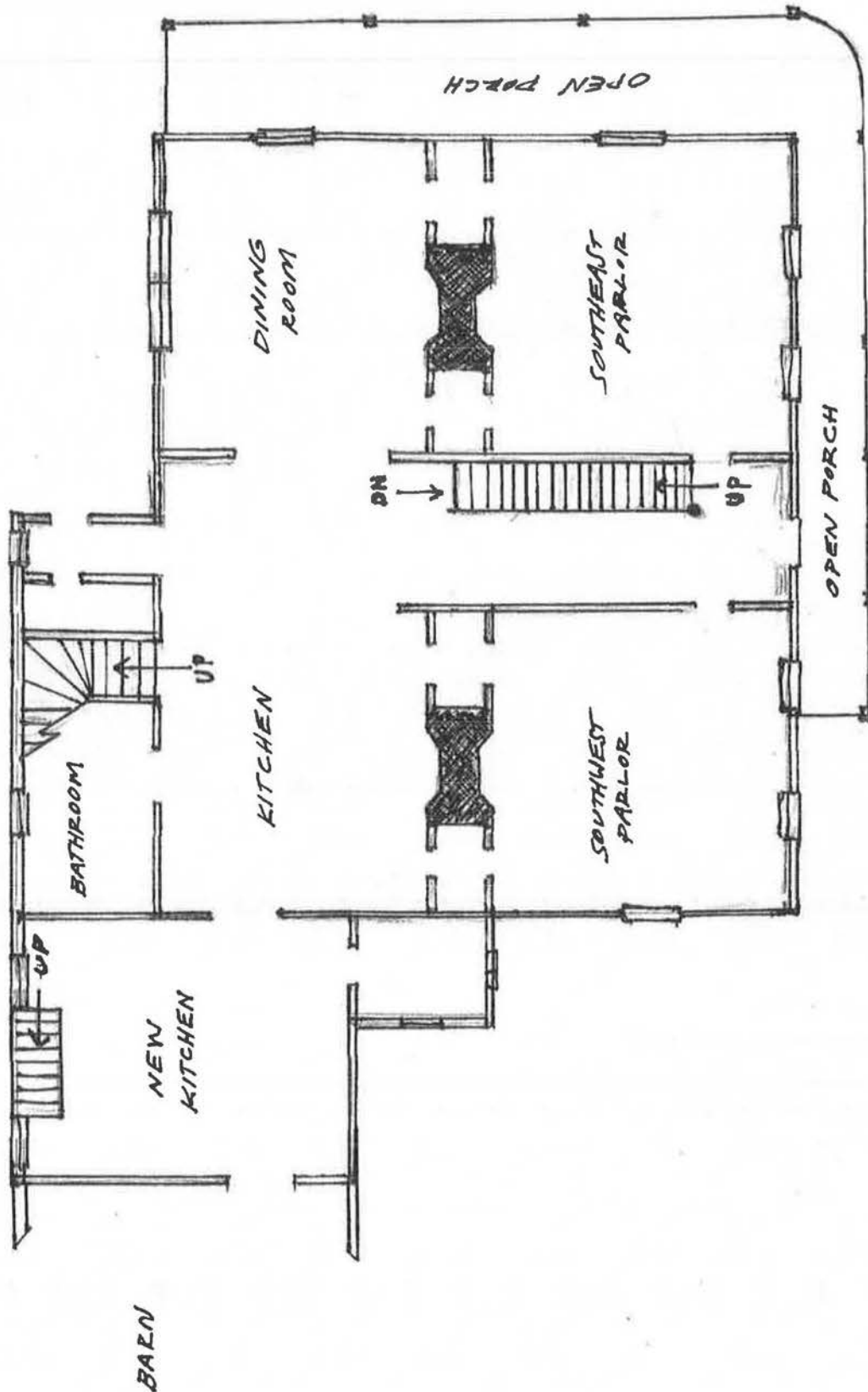
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Site Plan:

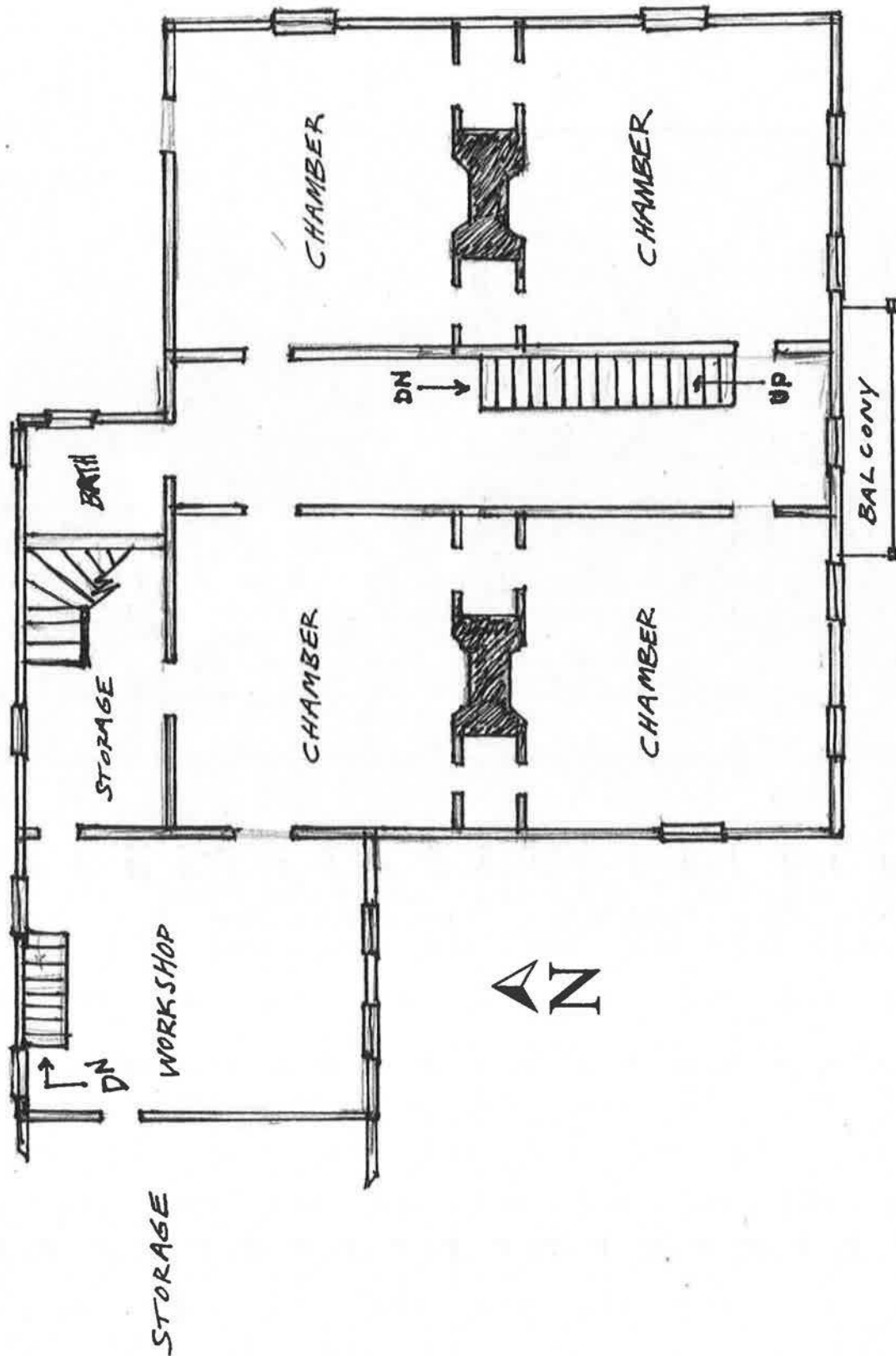


- A. Main Block, c. 1785.**
- B. Lean-to Addition, c. 1813**
- C. Side ell, c. 1820**
- D. Attached Barn, c. 1870.**
- E. Front Porch, c. 1903.**
- F. Side Porch, c. 1903.**

First-Floor Plan:



Second-Floor Plan:



Site Plan (with photo positions):





Whitfield Cowles House, 118 Spoonville Rd, East Granby. CT
41.901540°, -72.745932°

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet
Whitfield Cowles House; East Granby, Connecticut



South (front) and west (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing main block, c. 1785.

Camera facing northeast.

Photograph 1 of 20.



**Interior of cellar, showing foundation detail.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 2 of 20.**



South (front) and west (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing window, window surround, trim, cornice, and porch details. Camera facing northeast. Photograph 3 of 20.



North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from "Old County Highway", showing trim and cornice details.

Camera facing southwest.

Photograph 4 of 20.



**East (side) gable end of house from the "Old County Highway", showing molded rakeboards.
Camera facing northwest.
Photograph 5 of 20.**



**South (front) elevation of house from Spoonville Road, showing entry details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 6 of 20.**



South (front) and east (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing side porch details.

Camera facing northwest.

Photograph 7 of 20.



North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from the "Old County Highway", rear lean-to details.

Camera facing southwest.

Photograph 8 of 20.



South (front) and west (side) elevations of side ell, showing window, window surround, trim, and cornice details.

Camera facing northeast.

Photograph 9 of 20.



Interior of central hall, showing cellar access door details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 10 of 20.



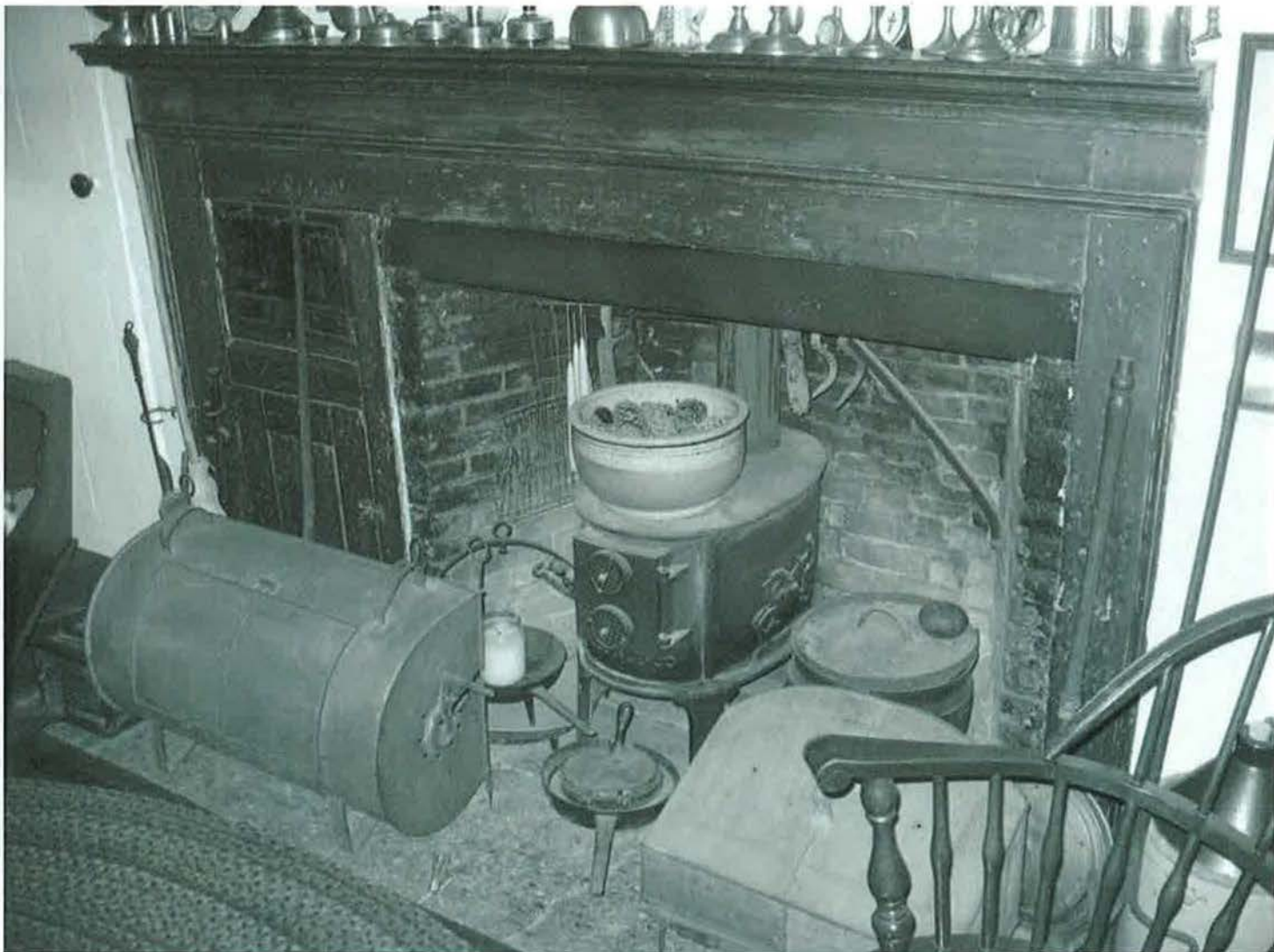
**Interior of cellar, showing first-floor framing and floorboard details.
Camera facing east.
Photograph 11 of 20.**



**Interior of central hall, showing stair, rail, and baluster details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 12 of 20.**



**Interior of original kitchen, showing wall, rail, and door details.
Camera facing southwest.
Photograph 13 of 20.**



Interior of original kitchen, showing fireplace and oven details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 14 of 20.



**Interior of original kitchen and dining room, showing enlarged entry details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 15 of 20.**



Interior of northeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 16 of 20.



**Interior of second-floor southeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing northwest.
Photograph 17 of 20.**



**Interior of second-floor hall, showing attic access door details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 18 of 20.**



**Interior of attic, showing rafter, purlin, brace, and roof sheathing details.
Camera facing southwest.
Photograph 19 of 20.**



**Windsor-style chair received by Whitfield Cowles upon his graduation from Yale in 1788.
Camera facing southwest.
Photograph 20 of 20.**













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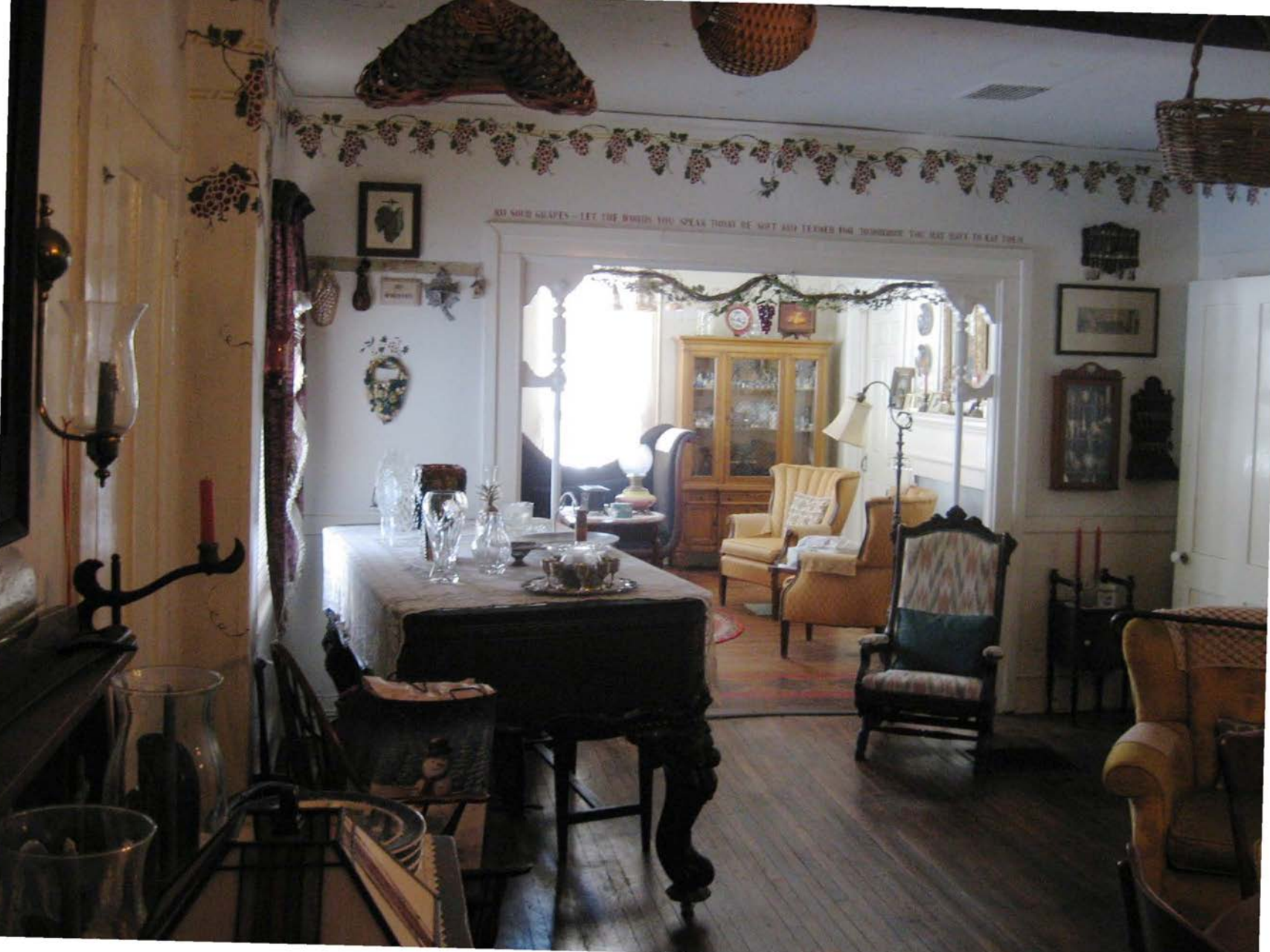






















National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Whitfield Cowles House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Hartford

DATE RECEIVED: 6/07/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/02/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/17/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/24/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000528

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See return comment

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER *JOR*

DISCIPLINE *Historic*

TELEPHONE _____

DATE *7/24/13*

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**State Historic
Preservation Office**



DECD
State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and
Community Development

MEMORANDUM

**TO: J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places**

FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator

DATE: March 28, 2014

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 28 day of March

2012, for nomination of the Whitefield Cowles House, East Granby, CT to the National Register of Historic Places:

- Original edited National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- Original USGS maps
- Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- Pieces of correspondence
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do _____ do not _____ constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: _____



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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Whitfield Cowles House

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 118 Spoonville Road not for publication

city of town East Granby vicinity

State Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06026

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Stacy Vairo 6/3/13
Signature of certifying official/ Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation officer CT SHPO
Title State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of certifying official Date

Title State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain:)	_____	_____

Kensington Grammar School/Jean E. Hooker High School
Name of Property

Hartford, CT
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheet(s).

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet(s).

Returned

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See continuation sheet(s).

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

See continuation sheet(s).

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheet(s).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheet(s).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Returned

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.75
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

A. 18 686972 4641299
Zone Easting Northing

C. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

B. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

D. _____ _____ _____
Zone Easting Northing

Additional UTM References on continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

See continuation sheet(s).

4 of 20.

North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from "Old County Highway", showing trim and cornice details.
Camera facing southwest.

5 of 20.

East (side) gable end of house from the "Old County Highway", showing molded rakeboards.
Camera facing northwest.

6 of 20.

South (front) elevation of house from Spoonville Road, showing entry details.
Camera facing northeast.

7 of 20.

South (front) and east (side) elevations of house from Spoonville Road, showing side porch details.
Camera facing northwest.

8 of 20.

North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from the "Old County Highway", rear lean-to details.
Camera facing southwest.

9 of 20.

South (front) and west (side) elevations of side ell, showing window, window surround, trim, and cornice details.
Camera facing northeast.

10 of 20.

Interior of central hall, showing cellar access door details.
Camera facing southeast.

11 of 20.

Interior of cellar, showing first-floor framing and floorboard details.
Camera facing east.

12 of 20.

Interior of central hall, showing stair, rail, and baluster details.
Camera facing northeast.

13 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen, showing wall, rail, and door details.
Camera facing southwest.

14 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen, showing fireplace and oven details.
Camera facing southeast.

15 of 20.

Interior of original kitchen and dining room, showing enlarged entry details.
Camera facing southeast.

16 of 20.

Interior of northeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing southeast.

17 of 20.

Interior of second-floor southeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing northwest.

Returned

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Name of Property: Whitfield Cowles House

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Architectural Description: Whitfield Cowles House

The Whitfield Cowles House, erected circa 1785, sits on the north side of Spoonville Road, less than one-tenth of a mile east of its intersection with South Main Street (Connecticut Route 187), and three-tenths of a mile north of the Farmington River, in East Granby, Connecticut. The residence is located on the west side of an abandoned section of the "Old County Highway" or "East Granby Road", a Colonial thoroughfare which branched off of the old Granby Turnpike (currently Connecticut Route 189) in Bloomfield. The road bridged the Farmington River just south of the property, and then ran north through the center of East Granby and on into Massachusetts.¹ A small stream, located approximately 100 feet west of the house, runs due south and eventually flows into the Farmington River. The home is a two-story central hall Georgian-style frame house with a side-gabled roof and twin chimneys (Photograph 1). It is situated on a small knob at the edge of a wooded three-and-three-quarter-acre lot. This section of East Granby, once commonly referred to as "Spoonville", remained largely rural until the second half of the twentieth century, however over the course of the last 50 years suburban development has steadily reshaped the area's character. While several eighteenth and nineteenth-century farmsteads remain as testaments to the area's former agricultural utility, its current use is primarily residential. Likewise, while various barns and other outbuildings once dotted the Cowles property, these were lost to local highway redevelopment following the devastating 1955 flood, and to a small forest of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees which slowly reclaimed the abandoned farmland.

The Whitfield Cowles House consists of a two-story main block measuring 40 feet by 36 feet. The residence faces south, towards Spoonville Road, and the five bays of the façade are spaced in a two-one-two arrangement. The home's foundation and chimneystack bases are fieldstone laid up dry in irregular course with dry-laid cut stone capping the former (Photograph 2). The exterior walls are sheathed in clapboards fastened four inches to the weather with cut nails. Simple wood corner boards and window surrounds frame the sheathing (Photograph 3). The façade fenestration consists of 9/1 double-hung sash on the first floor and 6/1 double-hung sash on the second. Fenestration throughout the remainder of the main block largely mimics this pattern, however there is a modern 8/8 double-hung window on the second floor of the north (rear) elevation and the windows on the east and west (side) elevations are 6/6 double-hung sash.² The front elevation of the main block has a dentiled cornice with shallow returns. The rear elevation has a similar cornice yet lacks a dentil course as found on the façade (Photograph 4). The side elevations have molded rake boards (Photograph 5).

The façade of the Whitfield Cowles House is dominated by a large full-height porch. This feature is not original to the home and photographic documentation suggests that it was likely added around 1903.³ The porch is a feature typical of the Classical Revival style and its addition reflects the common practice of adding fashionable architectural details to older residences in order to better reflect contemporary building patterns. The two-story porch is centered on the façade and is approximately 24 feet wide and nine feet deep. It is supported by four fluted Doric columns and has a simple entablature with a narrow frieze and denticulated cornice, the latter being identical to that applied to the facade. The porch has a shallow hipped roof. There is a balcony supported by the two interior porch columns over the entry. This is supported by the two center columns of the main porch. The primary entrance to the home is

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the southeast and southwest parlors experienced several alterations during the addition of the front porch in 1903. The most significant was the lengthening of the window openings on the façade and side elevations and the installation of new sash. Despite this change, however, it appears that the original window trim was not replaced, but was rather simply extended downward to accommodate the change. The remaining additions to these formal spaces were primarily superficial. These included the installation of four-panel entry and pass-through doors with butt hinges and ceramic doorknobs, and the addition of plain mopboards. Surviving original details in the southeast parlor include the chamber's wide board floors, fireplace surround, stone hearth and lintel, beaded post casings, and six-panel doors with iron latches. The southwest parlor likewise retains its wide board floors and brick fireplace with crane, however the post casings and fireplace surround have been altered.

The rear section of the central hall leads into the original kitchen, located in the northwestern corner of the main block. The walls and ceiling of the kitchen are wet plaster and there is a molded chair rail throughout the room (Photograph 13). Wood strip flooring has been laid over the original wide board floor. The kitchen fireplace retains its original crane and stone hearth and there is a beehive oven to the left of the firebox. Below this is a small storage area with flush bead door (Photograph 14). Adjacent to the kitchen, situated in the northeast corner of the main block, is a space likely employed as the original dining room (Photograph 15). Similar to the kitchen, this room retains its wet plaster ceiling and walls, however wood strip flooring has likewise been laid over the floorboards. The original door opening has been widened and turned posts and wood brackets have recently been added as decorative details. A cast iron stove has been installed and a screen placed in front of the fireplace opening. Despite these alterations, however, the chamber retains its raised six-panel doors with iron Norfolk latches and butt hinges (Photograph 16).

The four primary chambers on the second floor of the house retain the majority of their late-eighteenth century details. These include wet plaster walls and ceilings; wide board floors; beaded post casings; eight-inch mopboards with molded tops; chair rails at window sill height (33 5/8"); and six-panel doors with raised panels, elongated quarter-round molded edges on the rails and stiles, butt hinges, iron Norfolk latches, and casings with applied band molding (Photograph 17).

A narrow batten door on the east side of the second-floor corridor leads to an unfinished attic. The door is fastened with rosehead nails driven through the battens and clinched on the beaded sheathing side (Photograph 18). As expected, the Cowles House employs oak post-and-beam construction, the arrangement of which is clearly visible in the attic (Photograph 19). Typical of residences built in Connecticut during the late eighteenth century, the framing is primarily hewn, while secondary timbers and sheathing display up-and-down saw marks. The rafter-and-purlin system is supported by heavy queen posts, which in turn have diagonal braces pegged to the girts. The horizontal purlins appear to be of continuous lengths. The rafters are partially dressed and many retain much of their original bark. Except for the chimney rafters, which are spaced 30" center, the rafters are spaced 39" on center and their peaks are pegged. The front of the home retains its wide roof sheathing boards, however those on the rear of the house have been replaced with pine boards from a local mill.

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Significance: Whitfield Cowles House

Summary

The Whitfield Cowles House, located in East Granby, Connecticut, is significant because of the important role the Cowles family played in the development of a number of nascent manufacturing entities located in the Farmington River Valley, the most important of these being devoted to the production of silver-plated wares (Criterion A). William Brown Cowles (1813-1887), son of Whitfield Cowles (1764-1840), pioneered the domestic use of electroplating in the production of silverware, an industry in which Connecticut would rise to national prominence during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Although Cowles's own small shop failed to turn long-term profits, it served as a springboard for a number of notable and prosperous manufacturers, including the Rogers Brothers Company, one of the founding partner firms within the nationally-prominent International Silver Company, originally of Meriden, Connecticut. Currently inhabited by a seventh consecutive generation of the Cowles family, the Whitfield Cowles House represents a fine example of Georgian-style Colonial architecture, usually well-preserved in its overall configuration and finishes (Criterion C). The Classical Revival alterations to the façade and east elevation are typical of early twentieth-century treatments to eighteenth-century homes and since they have sympathetically graced the home for over 110 years have attained historical significance in their own right.

Historical Significance

Turkey Hills

Originally, the majority of the land that now comprises the town of East Granby, Connecticut was included in a disparate western settlement of the town of Windsor. Known to the Native Americans as "Massaco", this area was incorporated as the town of Simsbury in 1670 after developing a sizable population of its own. While the population of Simsbury steadily grew following its incorporation, the majority of the town's residents were concentrated on the west side of town. Lands to the east, over Peak Mountain, were not granted until the late 1680s. Twenty-three parcels were eventually granted in 1688, however settlement along the eastern fringes of town, known then as Turkey Hills, did not take place in earnest until between 1707 and 1712.

As settlers trickled into Turkey Hills over the course of the following years, a growing contingent of residents in the area called for the creation of their own ecclesiastical society. Citing the difficulties inherent in attending church services over the mountain in the Simsbury meetinghouse, residents of Turkey Hills petitioned for increased ecclesiastical freedom from Simsbury in 1729, 1732, 1733, and again in 1735. Finally, in 1736, after recognizing the implications of population growth in Simsbury, the Connecticut General Assembly declared Turkey Hills one of a number of separate ecclesiastical societies within the town. The newly

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Much to his parishioners' chagrin, Whitfield Cowles increasingly grew into an active trader and soon opened a small shop in his house on School Street. Furthermore, Cowles had developed into a prolific *producer* of the very goods that he traded. From his home at 118 Spoonville Road, Reverend Cowles is rumored to have produced a wide variety of such goods. A room "above the woodshed" at the house at 118 Spoonville, referred to as "the broom shop", is believed to be where he assembled brooms and tin candle ware for sale. He was also active in the production of cider brandy, likely taking advantage of the distillery he assumed when he purchased the property. According to critics in the parish, Cowles also bred and butchered hogs for shipment and sale as far away as New York, allegedly even performing such tasks on the Sabbath.⁴

Coupled with his frustrating secular pursuits, Cowles was also considered to be a political maverick within his ministry. In an arena of staunch Federalist sympathy, Cowles was an uncompromising Democratic-Republican. His Jeffersonian politics turned many in his Society against him and by 1808 such rivals had trumped up enough charges to bring him before the North Consociation of Hartford County, the Congregational Church's governing and administrative body for northern Connecticut churches. The thirteen charges presented were flimsy at best and before the trial could even begin two were combined and two withdrawn. Cowles was eventually acquitted of six charges but still was found guilty of three, including allegations that he had transported brandy cider to Vermont, traveling thirty miles on the Sabbath without any necessity to do so; that he had fraudulently sold "soft, ill-fattened and unfit" pork to a widow of the parish; and that through a "profane" and "disorderly" demeanor had discredited his parish and driven members of his congregation towards other churches. As punishment Cowles was dismissed from the Congregational ministry with a caveat stating he could be reinstated should he, "show a sincere repentance", for the error of his ways.⁵

Cowles' dismissal proved to be highly controversial. Prior to the reverend's trial, his congregation voted unanimously that he should retain his position. Furthermore, following his removal, a faction within his congregation voted to reject his dismissal and to "withdraw the local church" from the formal Congregational organization on the grounds that the Consociation had gone too far. It is a testament to Cowles' reputation, as well as influence within the region that his removal would effectively cripple the ecclesiastical functionality of the area for many years to come. As a last resort, in February of 1810, Cowles attempted to appeal the decision of his dismissal, asking for "forgiveness for his faults, so far as he felt conscious of guilt." The appeal was roundly rejected, his peers finding his penance to be insufficient. By 1812, Cowles had been effectively excommunicated from the Congregational Church on grounds that, "a minister dismissed from his pastoral relations ceases to be a member of the church of which he was the late pastor."⁶

Freed from the burdens of ministry, Cowles did not remain idle. Instead he devoted himself to his economic and industrial pursuits. The earliest of Cowles' efforts are alleged to include the production of cotton cloth, perhaps the earliest in the area, and the distillation of peppermint. By 1811, a mere three years after his dismissal as minister, he had started producing hand and machine cards for the carding of wool from his residence at 118 Spoonville Road, selling them as far away as Maryland.⁷ Seeking to diversify, in 1812 Cowles partnered with Arthur Griswold and Charles W. Mills, a pair of local manufacturers who had recently acquired the Jeremiah Case mills in Tariffville, then known as Griswoldville. When Cowles joined the partnership the Griswold Mills boasted a near-complete clothier's business. While the business of spinning and weaving cloth was still done in-home, the factory machinery included carding machines, a fulling mill, dye house, and finishing shop.

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a second factory building located along the Farmington River and built a dam across to the eastern end of Pinney Island in order to furnish it with power. In November 1845, Cowles further partnered with John D. Johnson, another manufacturer of brass and German silver goods from Waterbury, Connecticut, thus forming the "Cowles Manufacturing Company", the intent of which being to produce electroplated silver goods of all kinds. As such, William B. Cowles & Co., and in turn the Cowles Manufacturing Company, became the first manufacturers of electroplated wares in the United States.¹²

Initially, the businesses were a remarkable success. Between 1845 and 1846, 98 men and 16 women worked on a variety of machinery which included the lathes, rolling mills, cutting dies, polishing frames, emery wheels, and grinding frames used for the manufacture of silverware, as well as all of the batteries, sinks, pots, baths, and wires required for the electroplating process. Due to the difficulty of finding workers experienced in the metal trades, very few of Cowles' employees were residents of Turkey Hills. Others traveled to the factory from neighboring towns, resided in the company's two-story boarding house, or built new homes near the factory. Examples of the latter include Thomas Cushman, a silversmith and book-keeper who built the home at 116 Spoonville Road in 1845, and laborer James B. Abbot, who built the residence at 153 Spoonville Road the same year.

Producing silver-plated goods of all varieties, from spoons to dishes, and even spectacles, the Cowles Manufacturing Company quickly blazed a trail that put them at the forefront of the silver-plating industry. In 1846, an article printed in the *New York Commercial* and *Hartford Courant* challenged readers to distinguish the Cowles Manufacturing Company's product from solid silver and stated that Cowles's goods were, "becoming celebrated throughout the country." Salesmen for the Cowles Manufacturing Company, including William B. Cowles himself, traveled as far south as South Carolina and as far west as Cleveland, Ohio pedaling the company's products. In its first year alone, the sales of silver-plated goods were valued at \$64,000, a notable figure for the time. The early success of the company was such that many in the public soon began to refer to the area around the factories as "Spoonville." These heady times of success, however, would prove very short lived.¹³

The initial profitability of the Cowles Manufacturing Company did not keep the business out of debt for long, and by the end of 1846 the original partners found themselves forced to mortgage their stakes in the company to pay off their debts. James H. Isaacson, the first of the founders to flee the foundering firm, fired off a letter of, "abject distress" to Asa Rogers following his departure. The correspondence cited the company's failing quality of workmanship as well as the even more pathetic financial situation in which it could presently be found. Speaking of the qualities of the company's spoons Isaacson wrote, "In a word a meaner lot of work, in the finish than is now in the factory could not be found in this country... It would be dangerous for any insect to run across them for it would get so deep into the cavities that it would be a chance of his getting out & I am positive that they would never be found in a decently dark day without they had been laid away to be found again, for there is not polish enough to reflect a particle of light." He concluded his lament, stating, "The work is so bad I have no hopes of it being sold, if packed up & I give everything up entirely until some system & responsibility can be had in the work." What made these comments even more damaging to the survival of the Cowles Manufacturing Company, however, was the increasing presence of competition.¹⁴

Silver-plating was radically new when Cowles Manufacturing Company adopted its use. As such, the company initially benefited from a complete domestic monopoly on the technology. Connecticut, however, was a state already rich with silverware

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Courant during Connecticut's Tercentennial stated that, "In giving full credit to the various units of the International Silver Company that were concerned in the first successful production of silver-plated spoons, forks, etc., the importance of the work done by the Rogers brothers in Granby from 1843 to 1846 should not be overlooked. Modest in its origin and almost forgotten in the passage of the years, it was as a matter of fact of inestimable value." Thus, while unsuccessful in business himself, William B. Cowles laid the groundwork for a nationally celebrated industry that would thrive for decades to come.¹⁷

Architectural Significance

The Whitfield Cowles House is a well-preserved example of typical Georgian-style residential construction. Many of the home's original features have been little changed since 1785, and the mass, shape, window and door opening arrangements, as well as central-hall plan, are all in the standard tradition of Georgian-style architecture as found throughout New England. Notable exceptions include the addition of porches on the south and east elevations, as well as alterations made to the entry and windows. The majority of these changes, however, date to the turn of the twentieth century and, as such, have since attained their own historical significance.

The aesthetic similarities between architectural forms popular during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, including the Georgian, Early Classical Revival, and Greek Revival styles, and the Classical Revival style, popular during the period in which the aforementioned modifications took place, made residences like the Whitfield Cowles House perfect templates for architectural "upgrading." It is not typical, however, that such changes compliment the character of the home as well as they do on the Whitfield Cowles House, nor is it common that the general plan and interior details of the home would be so well preserved. The two-story porch with large fluted columns and dentiled cornice give the home a distinctly Classical Revival feel, while the retention of the original plan, as well as door and window arrangement, maintain the home's Georgian integrity. Likewise, the addition of a side porch does not overwhelm the architectural focal points of the home but still provided the type of outdoor living space that were so common among the architectural styles popular at the time.

The ability of any home to adapt to the changing needs and stylistic preferences of seven generations of residents while still maintaining its grace and character is at times dependant upon the kind of architectural evolution visible in the house at 118 Spoonville Road. Having served for over 225 years as both a residence and as a hub for a variety of cottage industries, it is also notable to find such a substantial inventory of intact original details, including cellar and attic framing, wide board floors, door and window trim, paneled doors, fireplace surrounds and hearths, as well as various hardware as can be found in the Whitfield Cowles House. In addition, the owners' archive of Cowles family artifacts, dating from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, further enriches the historical experience that defines a visit to the home. This collection is comprised of hundreds of sermons drafted by Whitfield Cowles, original land records, as well as family correspondence. It also includes a variety of other artifacts related to the Cowles family, including an assortment of spoons produced by the Cowles Manufacturing Company and the Windsor-style chair that Whitfield Cowles received upon his graduation from Yale in 1788 (Photograph 20).

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Name of Property: Whitfield Cowles House

County and State: Hartford, CT

Section number: 9

Page: 1

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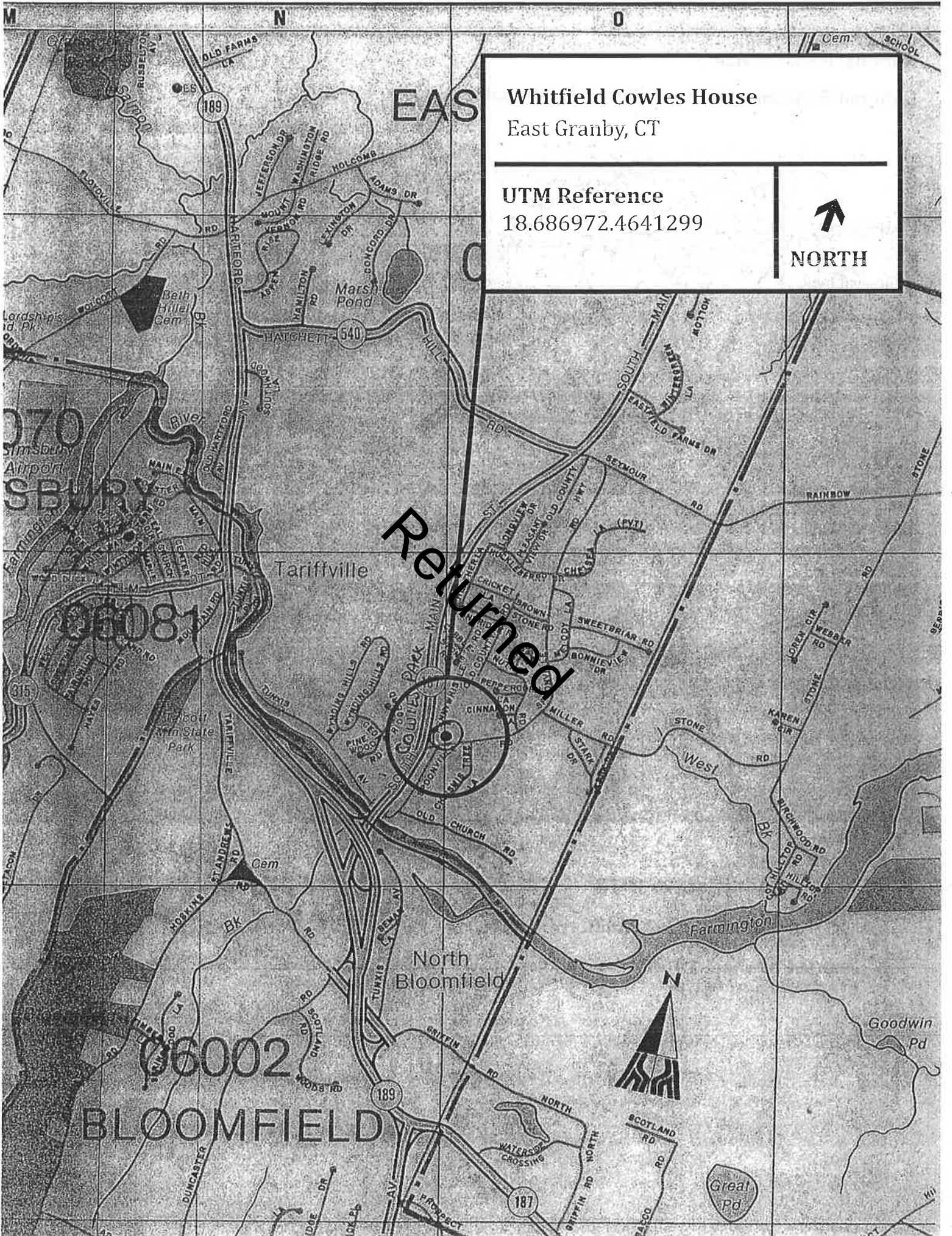
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Whitfield Cowles House
East Granby, CT

UTM Reference
18.686972.4641299

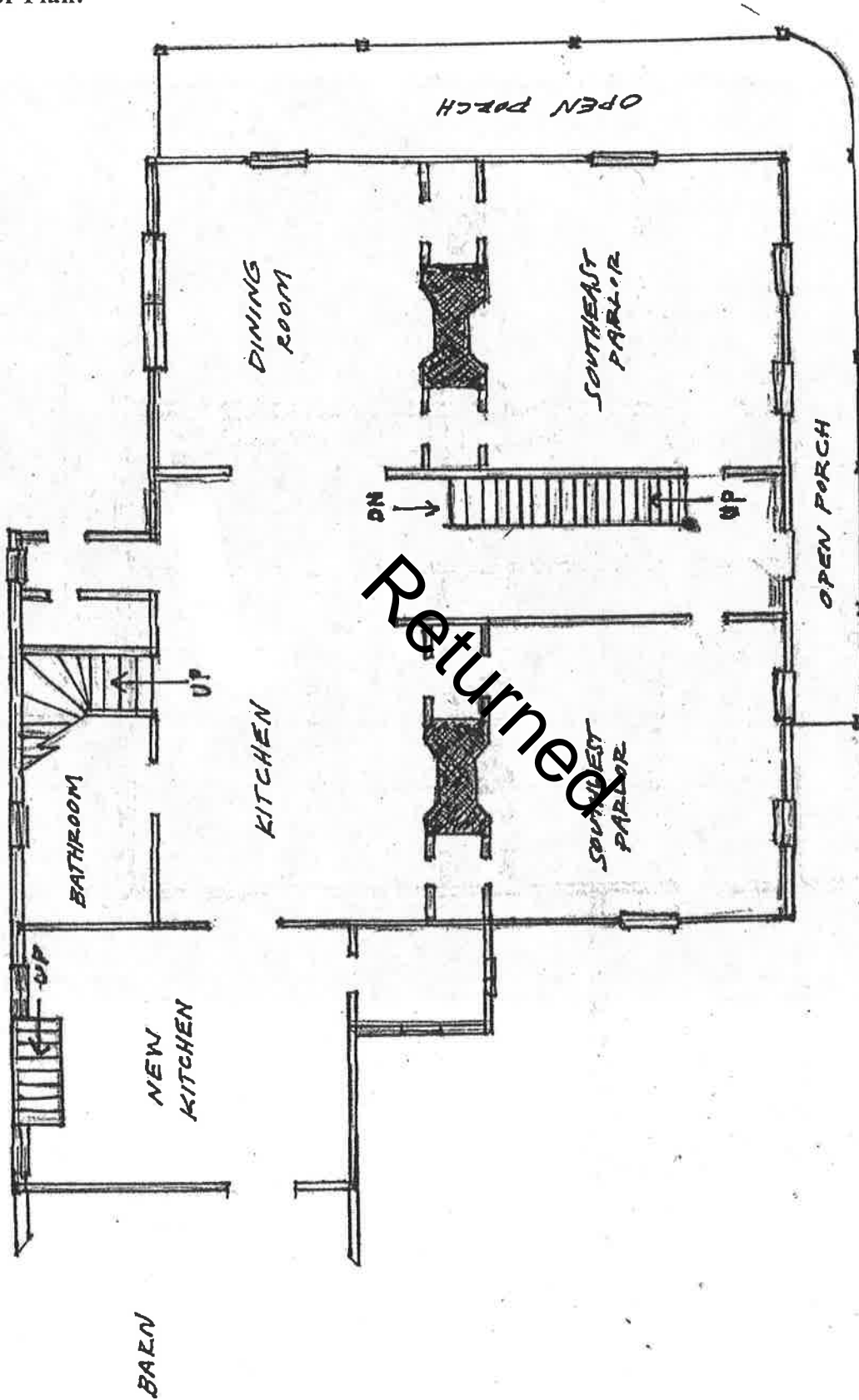


NORTH

Returned

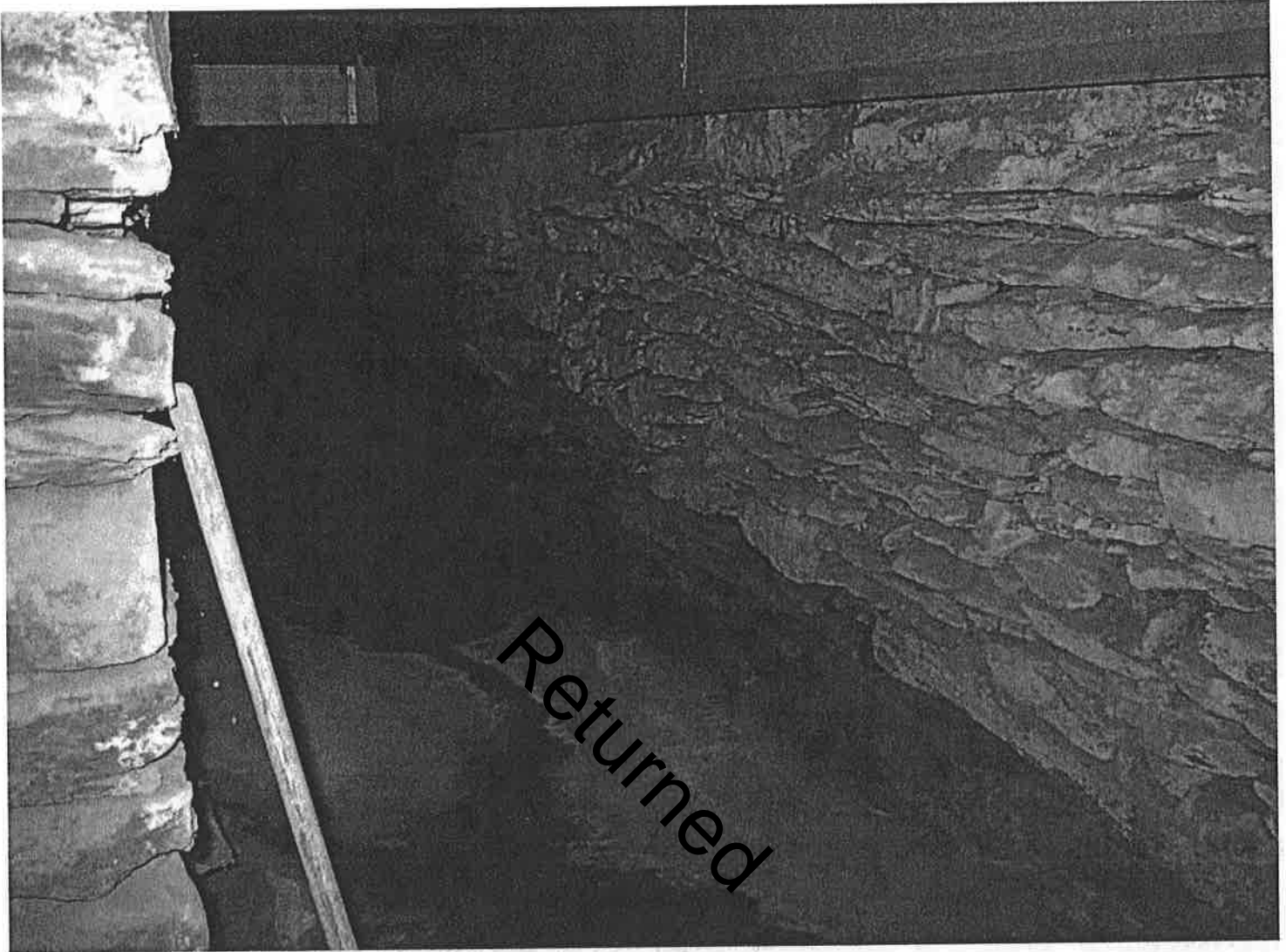


First-Floor Plan:



Site Plan (with photo positions):





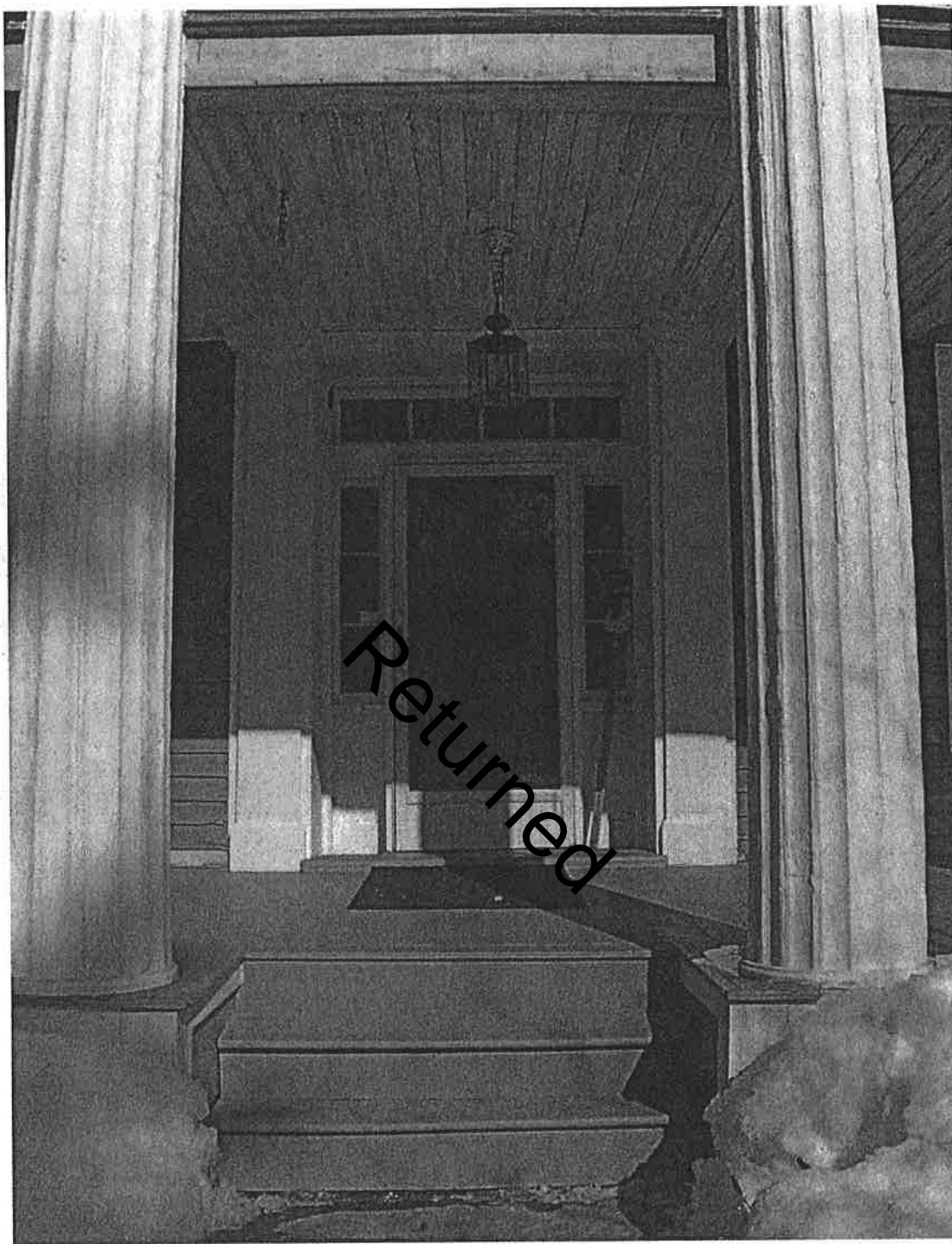
Interior of cellar, showing foundation detail.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 2 of 20.



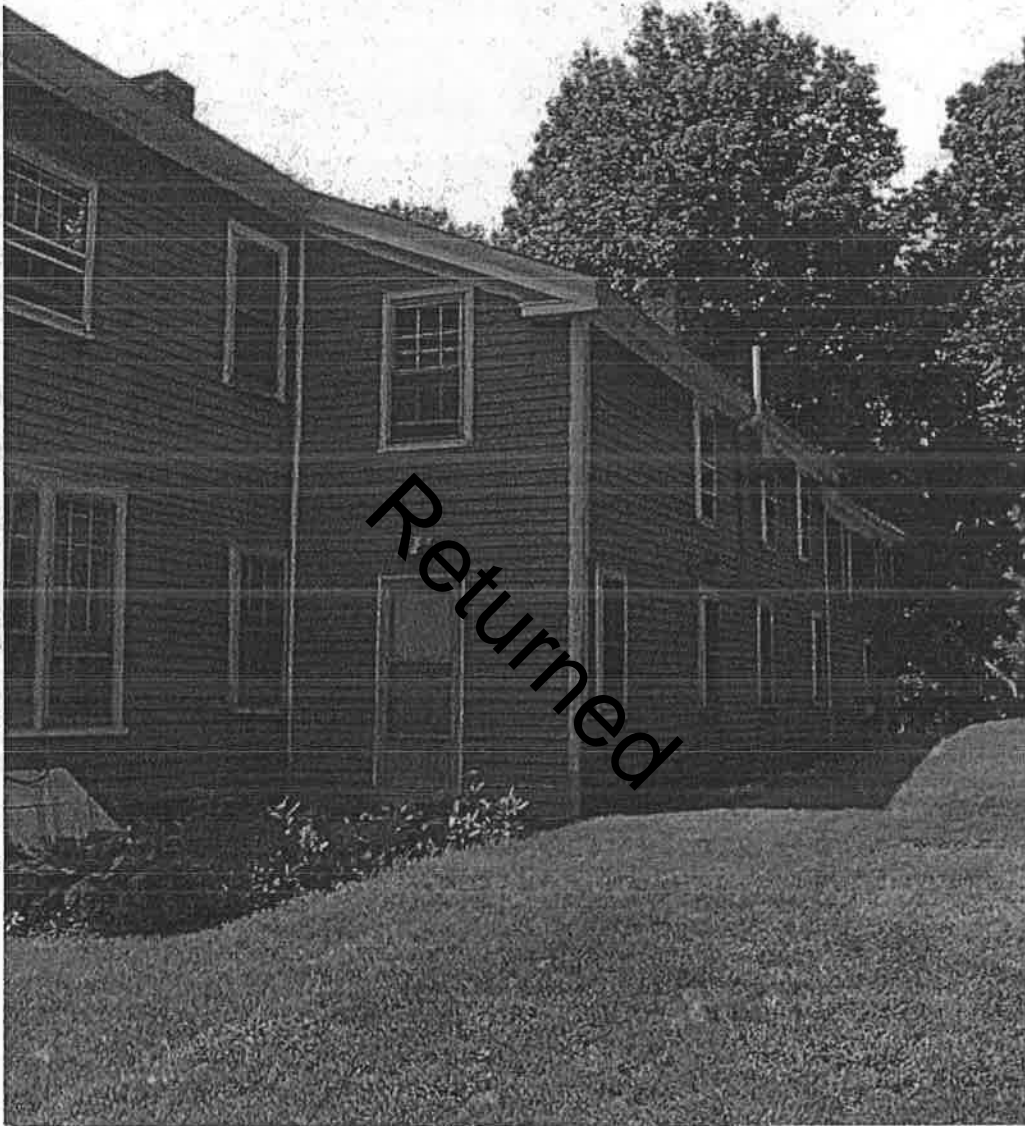
North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from "Old County Highway", showing trim and cornice details.

Camera facing southwest.

Photograph 4 of 20.



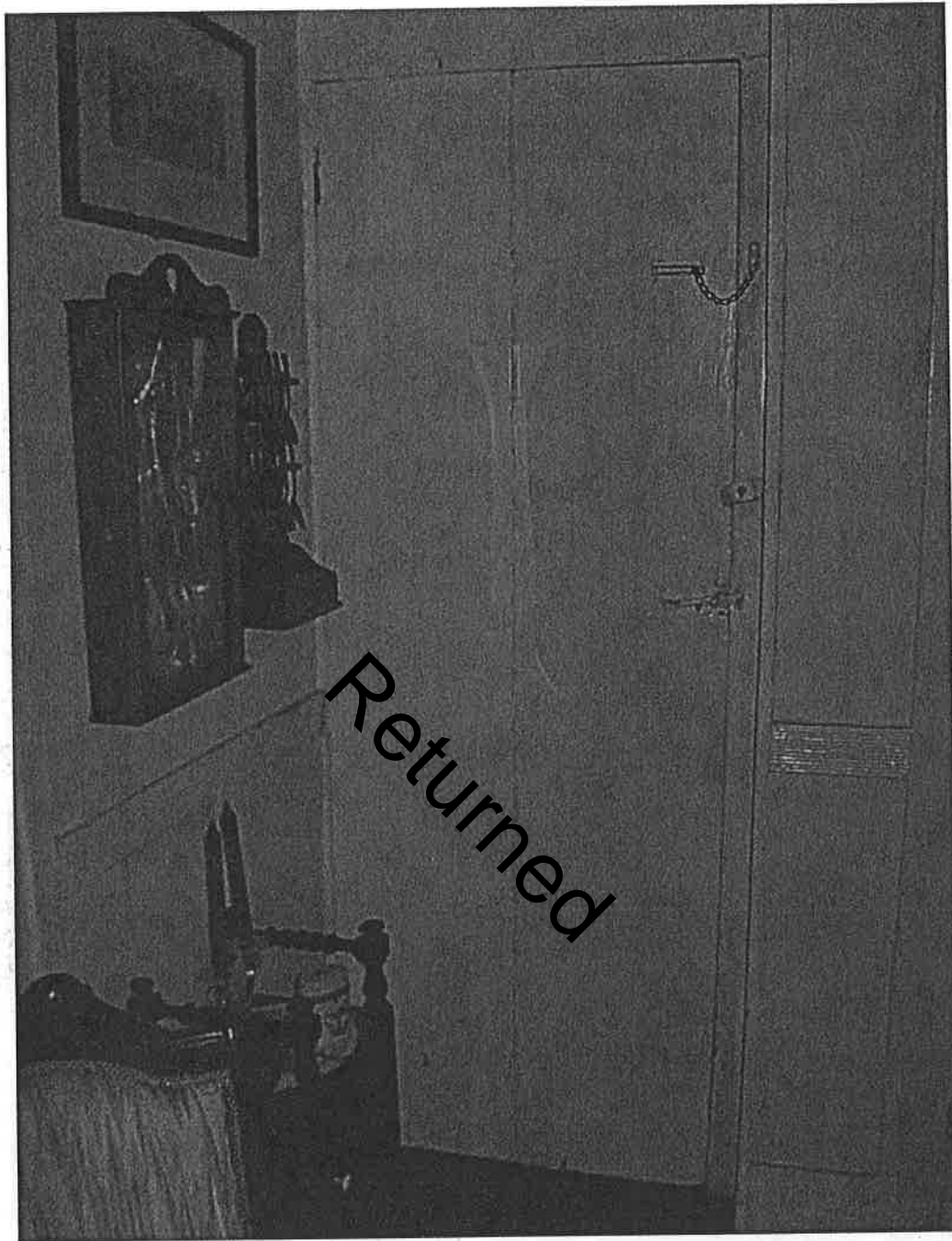
**South (front) elevation of house from Spoonville Road, showing entry details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 6 of 20.**



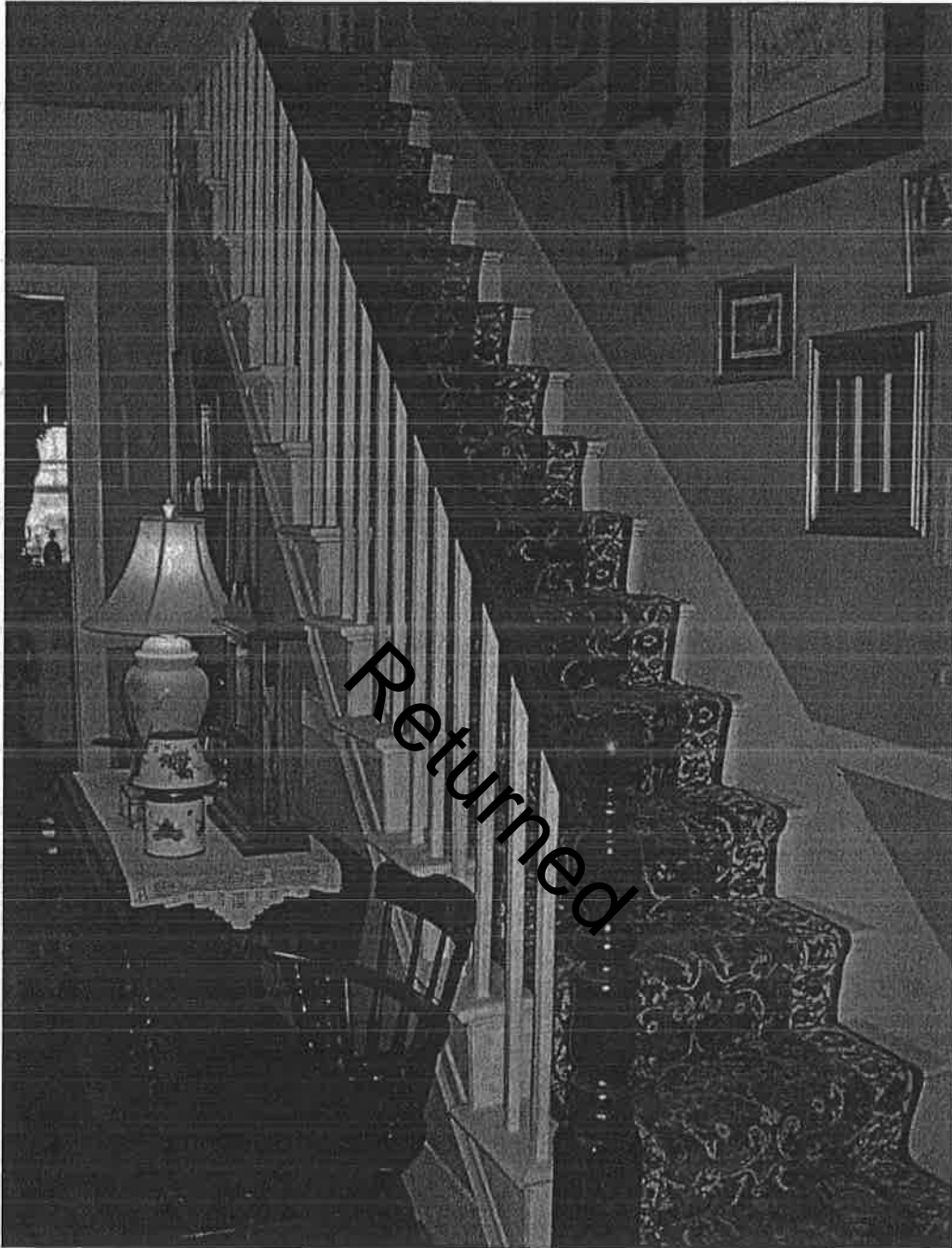
North (rear) and east (side) elevations of house from the "Old County Highway", rear lean-to details.

Camera facing southwest.

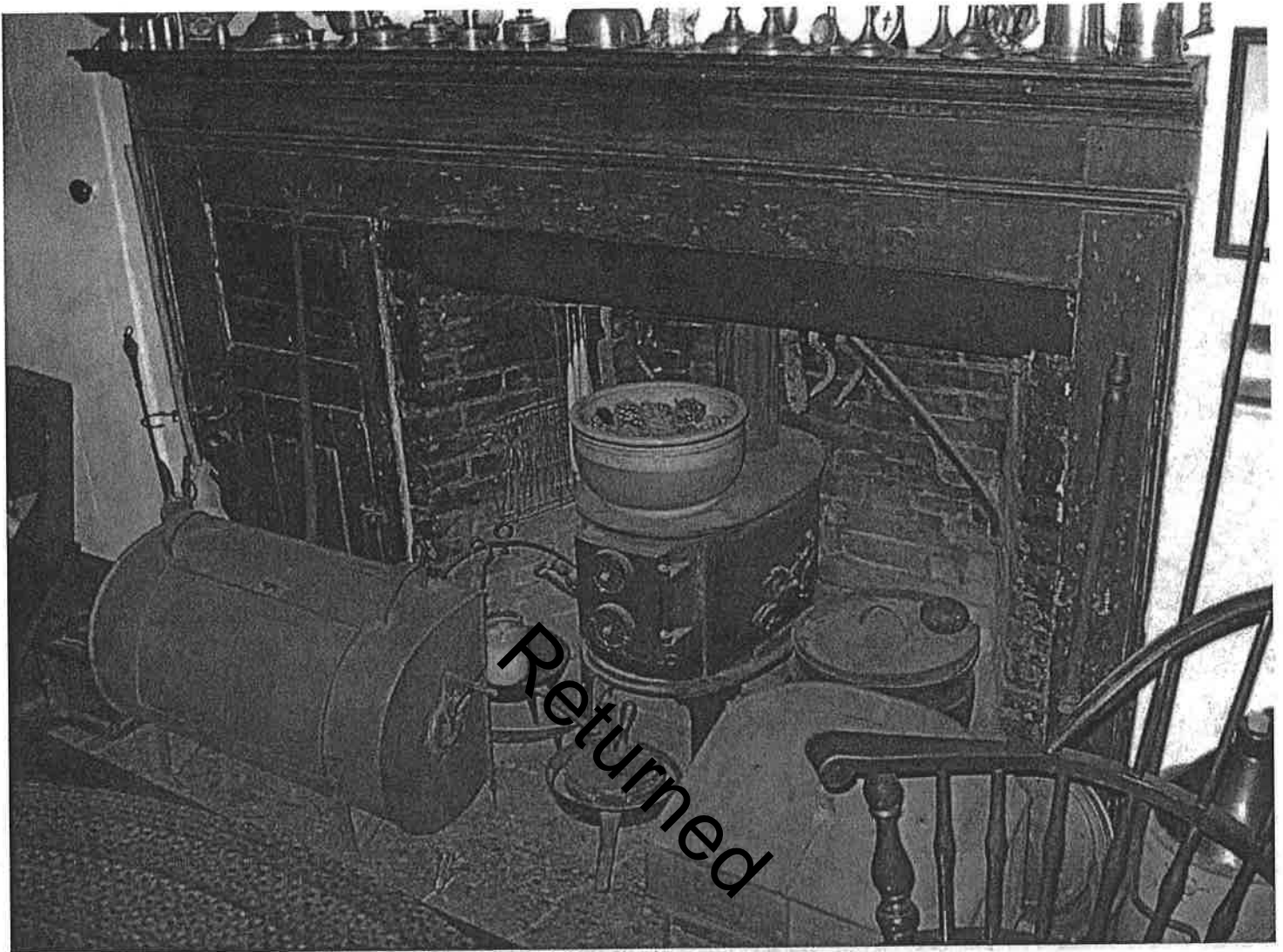
Photograph 8 of 20.



Interior of central hall, showing cellar access door details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 10 of 20.



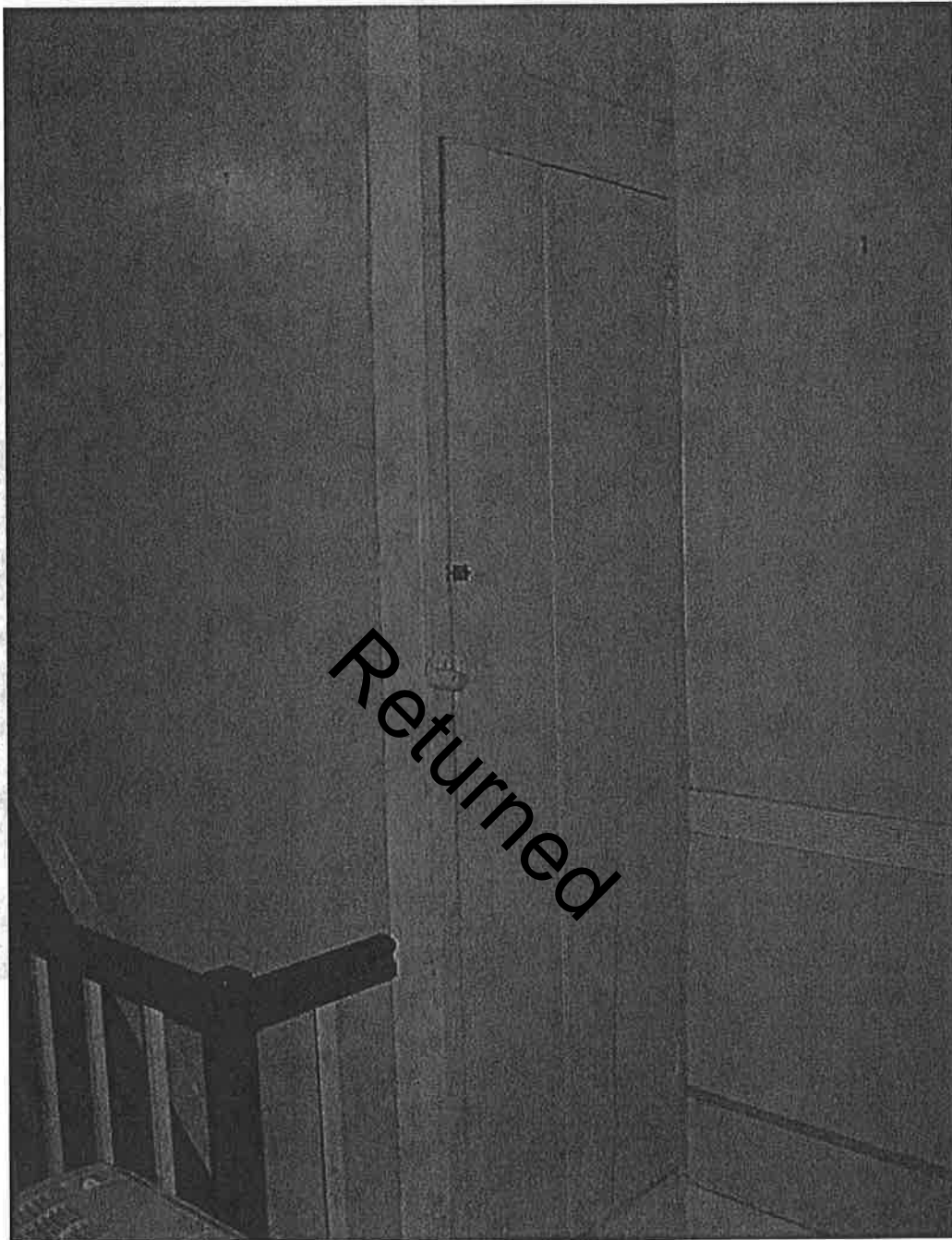
Interior of central hall, showing stair, rail, and baluster details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 12 of 20.



Interior of original kitchen, showing fireplace and oven details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 14 of 20.



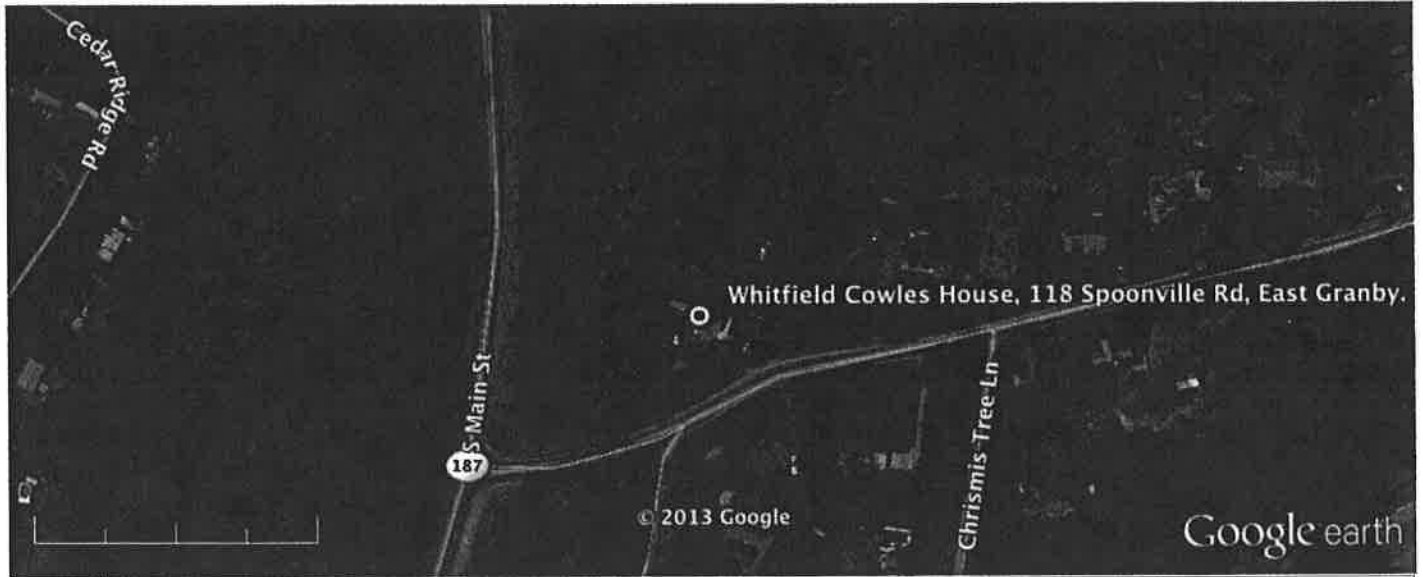
Interior of northeast chamber, showing six-panel door details.
Camera facing southeast.
Photograph 16 of 20.



Interior of second-floor hall, showing attic access door details.
Camera facing northeast.
Photograph 18 of 20.



**Windsor-style chair received by Whitfield Cowles upon his graduation from Yale in 1788.
Camera facing southwest.
Photograph 20 of 20.**



 Whitfield Cowles House, 118 Spoonville Rd, East Granby, CT
41.901540°, -72.745932°

Returned

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Whitfield Cowles House, 118 Spoonville Road, East Granby, CT
Reference Number: 13000528

Reason for Return:

The nomination has been submitted under criteria A and C with Areas of Significance under Architecture, Commerce, Industry, and Social History. The Period of Significance given is 1785-1962, with significant dates for c.1785 when the house was believed to have been built and c.1903 when the major Colonial Revival style alterations are believed to have been made.

Under Criterion A, the only area of significance appears to be Industry for the association of Whitefield Cowles (1764-1840) and William Brown Cowles (1813-1887) in the development of the industry devoted to the production of silver-plated wares. This venture, as it relates to the Cowles family, appears to justify a period of significance from c.1811-1846. It does not appear that commerce is justified, especially given the failure of the business as it relates to the Cowles family. Social History also does not appear to be justified. Although the story of Whitefield Cowles and his relation to the Congregational Church is interesting, it does not support significance for the property under social history.

Under Criterion C (architecture), the property does appear to retain architectural significance. However, the house underwent major alterations in the Colonial Revival style after 1902. These changes altered both the interior and exterior of the house. The Architectural Classification under Section 7 should include Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival. More importantly, Section 8 should indicate who is believed to have made those alterations. Was the property still in the Cowles family? What was occupation of the owners in the early 1900s? Ideally, more information should be uncovered regarding the date when the house was remodeled. These changes were highly significant in the history of the property and the nomination is incomplete without more documentation, especially if the period of significance proposed extends

to 1962. Since the available documentation suggests that the period of significance under Criterion A ends in the early nineteenth century, it is unlikely that the period of significance under Criterion C should extend beyond the estimated date of the Colonial Revival style alterations.



Roger G. Reed, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
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TO: J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 3 day of June
2013, for nomination of the Whitfield Cowles House East
Connecticut Granby, CT

to the National Register of Historic Places:

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- Original USGS maps
- Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- Pieces of correspondence
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do _____ do not _____
constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: _____