

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

1965 Theme: Arts and Science
Subtheme: Painting and Sculpture
1967 Theme: Colonial Architecture

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

John Trumbull Birthplace

AND/OR COMMON

Governor Jonathan Trumbull House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Lebanon Green

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lebanon

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

second

STATE

Connecticut

VICINITY OF

CODE

09

COUNTY

New London

CODE

011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lebanon Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Route 207

CITY, TOWN

Lebanon

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey (2 photographs)

DATE

1940

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE 1832

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This wedding present to Jonathan and Faith Trumbull is a two-story, five-bay clapboarded frame house, of simple early Georgian design, with a steep gable roof and a large square central chimney. Both the front door and the four flanking first story windows are topped by pediments with molding broken on the slope. The windows have twelve-over-twelve lights, and there is a row of panes below the pediment of the door, which is flanked by fluted pilasters.

The flues of three separate stacks unite as one central chimney in the attic. This unusual device allows for a central hall and stairway on the first two floors. The first floor contains a parlor, dining room, and bedroom. The ell in the center rear, a slightly later addition, has the kitchen and pantry.

The second floor has five chambers. At the head of the stairs is the small room which served as a secret office when the British Government put a price on Governor Trumbull's head. The only window in this room is a small shuttered opening, 27 inches square, placed high in the wall, well above the head of a seated person. Outside the office door is the sentinel's box in which a guard was stationed night and day during the Revolutionary War. A tunnel led from this room, behind the chimney, to the War Office next door.

The most interesting interior features are the window shutters with heart-shaped cutouts, the finely detailed main staircase, and the paneling in the rooms. The house contains some original Trumbull furniture and many valuable colonial pieces, including a large pewter collection.

Trumbull's house and estate was worth over 4000 pounds at the beginning of the War for Independence. He owned valuable furniture, a library, a store adjacent to his house, and a considerable amount of land and livestock. The house, a very well-furnished mansion of the time, originally stood at the intersection of Town Street and Colchester Road.

Little is known about the property for the forty-five years before 1830, when Deacon Gillett sold it to Mrs. Eunice Backus Mason who then had it moved to its present site on West Town Road, facing the southwestern corner of the Common. Little altered since its construction, the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution bought the house in 1934. A modern cottage, where the curator resides, is connected by two ells, to the rear of the original house, and this addition has apparently been built since the D.A.R. acquired the house.

The house was quite thoroughly restored about five years ago and today is very well maintained as a house museum. The colonial ambiance of Lebanon Common is preserved today by the fact that the town did not remain a busy trade center and is now a much quieter little town, off on a side road of rural eastern Connecticut.

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1735, 1756-1781 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Joseph Trumbull constructed this house as a wedding present for his son, Jonathan, who became governor of Connecticut. From 1769 to 1784 he directed state operations from this house and during the Revolution it served as a headquarters of the Continental forces, a meeting place for American and French leaders and a major source of supplies for the troops. The residence was also the birthplace of Jonathan's son, John Trumbull, painter of historical scenes.

Built between 1735 and 1740, the Trumbull House is a fine and little-altered example of an early Georgian frame house.

Biography: John Trumbull

Portraitist and painter of historical subjects, John Trumbull (1756-1843) is best known for his paintings of leaders and dramatic scenes of the Revolutionary War.

Trumbull early developed an interest in art; but his father, feeling that painting was not a fit occupation for a gentleman, tried to discourage him. When John Trumbull was 15, his father sent him to Harvard, where, inspired by meeting John Copley, he began to copy works of art. Following his graduation in 1773, he continued to paint.

With the outbreak of the Revolution, Trumbull put his artistic ability to use as a maker of military maps. This talent helped him to rise quickly in the Continental ranks, and for a brief time he served as Washington's aide-de-camp. However, in 1777, he resigned his commission and settled in Boston to study art. The next year he served as volunteer aide-de-camp to General John Sullivan in the Rhode Island campaign; but, following the campaign, returned to Boston.

In 1780 he went to England where he spent several months studying under Benjamin West. Arrested on a charge of treason, he fled to the Continent upon his release from prison; and, after spending some time there, returned to the United States. In 1784 he returned to London where he again became a pupil of West. In a childhood accident, Trumbull had lost the sight of one eye; and, for this reason, West urged him to paint small pictures. This led Trumbull to compress his heroic, sweeping compositions into canvases probably more concentrated and powerful than West's own.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Sizer, Theodore, The Works of Colonel John Trumbull, New Haven, Conn., 1950.
 Sizer, Theodore, "John Trumbull" Dictionary of American Biography, New York, 1936.
 Labaree, Leonard W., "Jonathan Trumbull" Dictionary of American Biography, New York, 1936.
Connecticut--A Guide to its Roads, Lore and People (American Guide Series) Boston, 1938.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	7 3 1 9 20	4 6 1 1 2 1 9 2 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Trumbull house is not located on its historic site, but it was moved only a few hundred feet and its situation is picturesque--about 100 feet back from West Town Road and framed by large trees and stone walls. The boundary of the landmark is the property line which encircles approximately three acres

(Continued)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project: 1967 Charles W. Snell

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service --Historic Sites Survey

DATE

January 7, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

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

[Signature] SIGNATURE ((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

TITLE

Designated: Dec 21, 1965 date

Boundary Certified: Amelia Harris 7-2-75 DATE

Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER ((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Boundary Affirmed: [Signature] 7/3/75 DATE
 Director, OAHIP date

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John Trumbull Birthplace

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Within the property boundaries, but not a part of this landmark is the Wadsworth Stable, an architecturally and historically interesting structure, believed to date from 1730. It was moved from the Hartford estate of Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth when his home was destroyed in 1954. The stable sheltered the horses of Washington, Lafayette, Rochambeau and de Ternay when these leaders met at the Wadsworth Mansion September 20-21, 1781.

Unfortunately both the War Office and the Trumbull house have been moved from their original sites and the office is not included in the D.A.R. property.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Returning to America in 1789, Trumbull traveled from New Hampshire to South Carolina painting portraits of the new nation's leaders, and sketching the battlefields of the Revolutionary War. With this material, he composed his most important works. Outstanding among these was his "Declaration of Independence." In this canvas, only 30 inches wide, are 48 portrait figures, all grouped naturally and convincingly in a manner suitable to the solemn occasion. Although the subject lacked action, Trumbull managed to convey its excitement.

After 1794, Trumbull produced little of real merit. He remained, however, an important figure in American art. He was commissioned in 1817 to paint four Revolutionary War scenes for the rotunda of the Capitol, thus becoming the first American painter to receive a commission from the Federal Government. In 1832 Yale University opened a gallery devoted to Trumbull's paintings. This gallery was one of the first art museums in the English-speaking world.

History: Jonathan Trumbull House

In 1735 Jonathan Trumbull married Faith Robinson and his father, Joseph, began construction of this house for them. The Trumbulls had six children, all born here. Joseph was the first Commissary General to the Continental Army, Jonathan also became Governor of Connecticut, Faith, Mary married William Williams of Lebanon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, David, and John who was a well known artist, often called the painter of the Revolution.

Lebanon was on one of the most travelled routes between New York and Boston in colonial days. From here Jonathan Trumbull managed the family's considerable trade with the West Indies, England, Amsterdam and Hamburg, importing directly from the mother countries to ports along the coast and the Connecticut River, on ships he either owned or chartered himself. Lebanon early became known as a center of revolutionary military activity and Jonathan Trumbull, the most prominent citizen of the town, was the only colonial governor to espouse the revolutionary cause.

During the winter of 1780-81, the mile-long Common was used as a parade ground for 200 Hussars under Duc de Lauzun, who were quartered here. Later that winter the Count de Rochambeau arrived with five regiments that camped in Lebanon until June 23, 1781, when the French troops left to join the Continental forces at Yorktown.

(Continued)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Originally located adjacent to the Trumbull house, and connected to it by a secret passageway was Jonathan Trumbull's store, often called the War Office. This building was a northern supply headquarters of the Continental forces in Connecticut and was only second to Massachusetts in the amount of men and money it supplied Washington's army. In 1780 Washington desperately sent to Jonathan Trumbull for food and the Governor responded with a train of oxsleds bearing 1500 barrels of beef and 3000 barrels of pork. Washington once said that "except for Jonathan Trumbull, the war could not have been carried to a successful termination."

In the War Office, the back room of the store, the Council of Safety of Connecticut held over 1100 meetings. Here plans were made for outfitting privateers, troop levies were issued, and conferences were held with Washington, Jefferson, Lafayette, Rochambeau, de Lauzun, Adams, Jay, Benjamin Franklin, and his son William, former Tory Governor of New Jersey, who was held prisoner in Lebanon.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

2

Levin, Phyllis Lee, Great Historic Houses of America, New York, 1970.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 2

Beginning at the northeastern corner of the property, the boundary runs south along the stone wall parallel to the west side of West Town Road for about 260 feet, then in a westerly direction along the stone wall for 490 feet, then northerly, still following the stone wall, for 260 feet, then northeasterly along the stone wall and then a cedar fence to the beginning point near West Town Road.