

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 30 1987  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic STRONG HOUSE

and or common

2. Location

street & number 2382 South Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Coventry

N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09

county Tolland

code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Coventry Historical Society

street & number P.O. Box 307

city, town Coventry

N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Coventry Town Clerk

street & number Town Office Building - 1712 Main Street

city, town Coventry

state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1987  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford

state CT

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Strong House, the oldest part of which is believed to date from 1710, is a 2 1/2-story clapboarded house with a lean-to at the rear (Photographs 1 and 2). The house is located on a wooded stretch of South Street in Coventry and has no readily visible neighbors. The property includes a small field west of the house; a well with well-sweep to the east; and 2 c.1930 clapboarded outbuildings, a barn and a wagon shed, built on the site of older outbuildings (Photographs 3-5). In front of the house is 1937 granite monument with the name of the house and information about the relationship between the Strongs and Nathan Hale. The outbuildings, well, and monument are considered contributing because they are associated with the c.1935 restoration of the property, part of its historical significance. The site thus consists of 3 contributing buildings (the house, barn, and wagon shed), 1 contributing structure (the well), and 1 contributing object (the monument).

The house's facade is five bays wide, with a center entry; the doorway has a simple surround of wide plain boards enframed by a back molding. The facade is unusual in that the window spacing results in a very wide blank space at the ends. The house is oriented with the ridge of its asphalt-shingled roof set parallel to the road, and there are two brick interior end chimneys.

The house is believed to have been built in at least three stages: a one-room, end-hall part, corresponding with the present east half of the house; enlargement with a large room to the west, relocation of the entry and hall at the center of the house, and possibly at the same time addition of the small westernmost bay to create a symmetrical facade; and the addition of the lean-to.

These divisions appear on the interior as breaks in the fieldstone foundation, differences in framing members, and discontinuities in the roof framing. The east middle front room, presumably originally the main room of the house (Photograph 7), has a large exposed summer with chamfered corners which extends into the present hallway, where a large flared corner post is visible (Photograph 6). The raised paneling and fireplace cupboard in this room, as well as the mantel and beam casings in the room above, appear to be later additions. The original entry was probably in the eastmost bay, which must have accommodated a stairway and a much larger chimney than the present one. On the second floor, large shouldered posts mark this bay (Photograph 9). In the attic, the east half of the roof is constructed with purlins and has large rafters at the ends and at the division between the two rooms; sawn-off pegs for plank walls perforate the end rafters.

(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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> antiquarianism
Criteria A,B,C				
<b>Specific dates</b>	c.1710 - built c.1935 - restored	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Not known	

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### Summary and Architectural Significance

The Strong House in Coventry is significant as a rare example of early 18th-century domestic architecture, one which, despite additions and alterations from later in the 18th century (themselves of architectural interest) continues to exhibit the distinctive archaic features which are characteristic of houses of the period 1700-1740: one-room plan, extremely heavy framing members, shouldered posts, exposed beams, use of wide-board wainscot for interior finish, purlin and principal-rafter roofing systems, and plank walls (Criterion C). Although each of these features continued in one form or another for many years beyond the early period, they appeared with decreasing frequency as the 18th century advanced, and almost never, as in the Strong House and other houses of the early 18th century, all together. The alterations to the house are characteristic of later 18th-century work. The enlargement of the house created the five-bay symmetrical facade common in the period, while raised-panel walls and built-in cupboards updated the interior in a standard manner (though the earlier wainscoting was saved in the new hallway). Lean-tos were a frequently used method of enlarging houses with minimal framing changes. The Strong House is also significant because it dates from the first years of settlement in Coventry, thus recalling the town's early origins as an agricultural community (Criterion A). Finally, the house is significant for its association with George Dudley Seymour, an energetic early 20th-century antiquarian whose influence was felt throughout the state (Criteria B). Seymour restored the house in the 1930s as part of his effort to memorialize Nathan Hale.

### Historic Context

Like most eastern Connecticut towns, Coventry was only sparsely settled before 1700, but in the first years of the 18th century, numerous migrants from older Connecticut and Massachusetts towns arrived and set about farming the area; Coventry had enough residents to be made a town in 1711. Among the early settlers were members of the Strong family of Northampton, Massachusetts. These included Jedediah (1639-1733), who arrived in 1709 at the age of 70, and Preserved (1680-1765), presumably his son, who arrived from Lebanon, Connecticut, in 1720. Like nearly all their neighbors, the Strongs were farmers. Whether it was Jedediah or Preserved who built the dwelling, the Strong House remains important as a rare artifact from the first generation of Coventry settlement. The architectural integrity of the house, which is clearly identifiable as a product of the first years of the 18th century despite changes over time, reinforces its value for commemorating the historical development of the town.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Kelly, J. Frederick. "Porter House." Colonial Dames manuscript, 1924, State Library, Hartford.

Seymour, George Dudley. "Northampton House." Colonial Dames manuscript, 1935, State Library. Includes extensive measured drawings of restoration work. (continued)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 4

Quadrangle name Coventry

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

118	7210	4110	416	217	010
Zone	Easting	Northing			

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing			

C 


D 


E 


F 


G 


H 


### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the house, outbuildings, and associated lot known as 2383 South Street, shown as Map 25, Block 20, Lot 1A in the Coventry Assessor's records, and recorded in the land records in Volume 212, page 265.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
			N/A

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth, National Register Coordinator edited by John Herzan,

organization Historic Resource Consultants date March 24, 1987  
The Colt Armory

street & number 55 Van Dyke Avenue telephone (203) 547-0268

city or town Hartford state CT

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

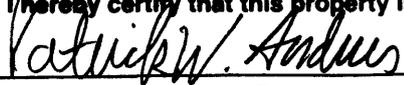
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for  date 1/15/88  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date 1/15/88

Chief of Registration

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

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

Reference Number: 87001906

Date Listed: 01/15/88

Strong House  
Property Name

Tolland  
County

CT  
State

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**This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, if any, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.**

Patrick W. Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

1/15/88  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section #3 Classification

Accessible should read: yes:restricted

Present Use should read: museum

These blanks were inadvertently not filled in. The correct information was confirmed with John Herzan, CT SHPO National Register Coordinator, on date of listing.

**DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

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

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Strong House

Coventry, CT

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Description (continued):

The part with the west front rooms, which butts up against the east room with separate posts (Photograph 8), has no visible summers. The paneling in the lower room is similar to that in the east room and consists of fielded raised panels, with a bolection molding around the brick fireplace. There is a simple corner cupboard in the west front room. The roof in this part is carried on common rafters pegged together at the top. The framing and paneling of the west part appear to date from about 1770. Throughout the house are paneled doors (mostly three-panel), old hardware, and wideboard floors.

The walls of the hallway are entirely covered with horizontal beaded wainscoting of pine and vertical wainscoting of tulipwood (Photograph 6). The stair runs back to front in a straight closed stringer with a molded rail carried on turned balusters. The lean-to across the rear is clearly an addition, with separate rafters resting on the earlier rear plates.

In the early 1930s, the house was restored by noted antiquarian George Dudley Seymour. Seymour removed a two-story, full-width Greek Revival portico from the front, exposing the present denticulated cornice. He also took off a 1-story enclosed porch and 2-story bay window at the east end. Changes to the exterior were otherwise limited to repair of the old clapboards, addition of a crown molding to the cornice, and some additional small-pane twelve-over-eight sash to replace the Victorian sash then in place on the first floor. The major change to the interior, besides covering over stove-pipe holes and other repair to the plaster, was the installation of a small amount of vertical-board wainscot to finish off part of the north wall of the rear room. Seymour erected the monument to Elizabeth Strong Hale and also built or substantially rebuilt the house's outbuildings. Under public ownership of the house as part of the Nathan Hale State Forest, further excavation of the cellar occurred, with poured concrete walls at the rear.

Today the house serves as the museum and library of the Coventry Historical Society, which maintains antique furnishings in most of the rooms. The society has a live-in caretaker who uses the westernmost and rear rooms for his residence.



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Significance (continued):

local history research, a trust which is still in active operation.

Seymour was the epitome of early 20th-century antiquarianism. Himself a descendent of old New England families, of which he was very proud, he saw history and old houses as a way of affirming what he regarded as early New England values and the special status of the Puritans' descendants. The monument in front of the house refers to Elizabeth Strong Hale as "daughter of the Puritans," somehow especially fortunate for being "doubly descended from Elder John Strong . . . a pioneer founder of New England." In characteristic fashion, Seymour published his will in pamphlet form in the last year of his life. In addition to outlining his family genealogy and detailing his bequests, he chose a line of verse for his monument, one which could serve for his entire generation of antiquarians:

"Oh, call back yesterday, bid time return!"

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Bibliography (continued);

Seymour, George Dudley. Last Will and Testament. 1944.

Obituary of George Dudley Seymour. Antiquarian and Landmarks Society Newsletter,  
March, 1946.