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

## **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

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historic	Levi B. Frost	House				
and or common	Barnes Tave	rn				
2. Loca	ation					
street & number	1089 Marion A	venue	¢		NA_ not for pu	ublication
city, town	Southington		vicinity of M	Marion		
state	СТ с	ode 09	county	Hartford	boo	e 003
3. Clas	sification					
Category district building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered NA	wor Access yes	occupied rk in progress	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	t religio scienti	e residence lus ific portation
4. Own	er of Prope	erty				
name	Joyce L. & Wi	lliam P.	Yelenak			
street & number	1089 Marion Av	<i>r</i> enue				
city, town	Southington		vicinity of Ma	arion stat	te CT	
5. Loca	tion of Leg	jal De	scripti	on		
courthouse, regis	try of deeds, etc. Sou	thingtor	1 Land Re	cords, Town Cl	erk, Town H	Hall
street & number	75 Main Street	2		<u> </u>		
city, town	Southington			stat	e CT	
6. Repr	esentation	in Ex	isting (	Surveys		
title See cor	ntinuation shee	et.	has this pro	perty been determined	eligible? y	es <u>X</u> no
date				federal s	state county	local
depository for sur	vey records				······	

received OCT | 9 1987

date entered

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OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

## 7. Description

#### Condition

Condition		Check one
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered
<u> </u>	ruins	$\underline{\mathbf{x}}$ altered
fair	unexposed	

Check one  $\underline{\mathbf{x}}$  original site moved date \_

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

The Levi B. Frost House is a Greek Revival frame 2-story 3-bay structure with its gable end facing east toward the street. (Photograph 1) is located on Marion Avenue in the southwest corner of the Town of Southington, where the neighborhood still retains a semblance of its rural character. Judd Brook runs easterly along the southern boundary of the property. The house, popularly called Barnes Tavern, is on the site of a tavern conducted by Asa Barns<sup>1</sup> where Comte de Rochambeau twice was entertained.

The exterior of the house is covered by white clapboards and has narrow corner boards. Windows are fitted with black blinds. In the front elevation the recessed doorway, in the left bay, is flanked by plain pilasters that support a plain entablature with projecting cyma cornice. (Photograph 2) The two first-floor front windows, which are placed closer to one another than to the door, are tall, having nine tiers of four lights in single fixed sashes. At the second floor are three 12-over-12 windows. The windows have flat surrounds. The gable end is treated as a pediment with deeply recessed tympanum of clapboards in which there is a rectangular window. The peripheral glazing bars of the attic window are close to the frame, creating a pattern of two rows of four horizontal lights surrounded by a border of small lights. Two brick chimneys rise from the roof line, one about one-third of the way back, the second close to the rear wall.

The south elevation has six 12-over-12 windows on the first floor and six on the second, although they are differently spaced. A historic photograph shows, at the first floor, a door between the first and second windows from the rear, and, at the second floor, the absence of the second window from the front. (Photograph 3) On the north elevation, there are five windows at the first floor and four at the second. (Photograph 4) There is a 1-story ell at the rear, partially covering one of the second-floor windows while leaving two 12-over-12 windows clear. The rear gable end is not treated as a pediment and has two small windows. (Photographs 4, 5)

On the interior the front entrance has 5-paneled door and panels under the side lights, the whole in a molded surround. (Photograph 6) In the stairway rising against the south wall square pickets support a simple handrail that terminates in a volute. While the north front room does not have a fireplace, the room behind the hall does. (See floor plan.) This fireplace and its chimney were removed at an unknown date by a former owner and replaced in 1985. Floor boards in front of the fireplace show signs of fire damage as does the beam in the chimney base below. (Photograph 7)

In the south wall of the third room the surround is still in place for the former exterior door. Its band molding is different from that of the front door. (Compare Photographs 6 and 8.) The rear room has a

**Continuation sheet** 

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT

Surveys

For NPS use only received date entered Page 1

6

Item number

Historical and Architectural Survey of the Town of Southington		х	
1986			x local
Connecticut Historical Commission 59 South Prospect Street Hartford	СТ		
Census of Old Buildings			
c. 1930s		x state	
State Library 231 Capitol Avenue Hartford	СТ		
State Register of Historic Places			
1987		x state	
Connecticut Historical Commission 59 South Prospect Street Hartford	СТ		

NPS Form 10-900-a OMB No. 1024-0018 (3.82)Expires 10-31-87 United States Department of the Interior National Park Service For NPS use only **National Register of Historic Places** received **Inventory—Nomination Form** date entered Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT Description 7 1 Continuation sheet Item number Page

wainscotting of horizontal boards, much nicked and gouged, and a wellworn chestnut floor. The stone hearth of the fireplace is partially covered at one end by a floor cut on the diagonal for the entrance to the kitchen in the ell. (Photograph 9) Since more than a foot of the hearthstone is covered, the covering floor with the diagonal cut presumably is an alteration. At the same time a related alteration may have removed a section of the chimney stack that included an oven with front wall opening; the possible existence of an oven is consistent with the original length of the hearthstone and the size of the chimney base.

On the second floor the plan does not provide a hall, with the consequence that the circulation pattern is heavy in the central room. There are no fireplaces on the second floor. At the top of the front stairway pine floor boards run east-west and the trim has a band molding. In the central room chestnut floor boards run north-south. (Photograph 10) In the rear room the floor boards, chestnut, again are laid east-west, but (Photograph 11) Most doors have four recessed panels the trim is flat. but one has four raised panels and shows the scars from strap hinges. On the north wall in the second room there is a post visible. In the basement, the walls are fieldstone, apparently all laid at the same time. There is no vertical joint line to suggest otherwise. There is sign of a wide former basement entry on the south wall east of the former firstfloor door, and there is an existing door leading to stone steps at the southwest corner. There is a narrow cellar under the ell, connected to and part of the main basement. Supporting joists for the ell are tree trunks with bark intact, indicating that the narrow ell is old. The attic is one long space over the entire house. Roof framing uses purlins and diagonal braces. (Photograph 12) The south purlin is one continuous beam, 50 feet long. The north purlin was the same, but has been broken and repaired. Shingles originally were wood, then slate, and now wood again.

In the rear there is a 2-story frame barn, old, with vertical siding (Photograph 13), which contributes to the historic significance of the property.

The house was badly damaged by a fire in 1836. In careful examination it has proven to be impossible to determine with assurance what if any existing fabric pre-dates 1836.

<sup>1</sup>·Barns was the 18th-centiry spelling. Barnes with an e is first noted in Southington Land Records of 1825, volume 12, page 72.

## 8. Significance

1900 communications industry politics government transportation other (specify)
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**Specific dates** 1836

Builder Architect Unknown

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criterion C - Architecture

#### Criterion C - Architecture

The Levi B. Frost House is architecturally significant in Southington because it embodies the salient characteristics of the Greek Revival style, including recessed doorway flanked by side lights and pilasters, 3-bay front elevation, and pedimented gable in the temple form. It has been little altered since assuming its present form in 1836.

#### Architecture

In the Town of Southington there are some 46 Greek Revival-style houses. While all share the characteristics of being rectangular blocks with low pitched roofs, like temple roofs, with trabeated doors and windows and classical trim, they may be roughly divided into three types: the modest  $l_2^1$ -story structure, the conventional 2-story house with gable end toward the street in temple form, and the more elaborate 2-story house with pyramidal roof. The Levi B. Frost House is an example of the middle type.

Examples of the first and third types are relatively few in number. 1577 West Street, 1848, is a  $l_2$ -story house with gable end toward the street but the gable end is not treated as a pediment. The door is recessed with side lights in a fashion similar to that found in the Frost House. There are corner pilasters and, along the side elevations, rectangular windows in the frieze to light the low second story.

The more elaborate 2-story house with low pyramidal roof is represented by several examples. The Samuel Clark House, 67 West Street, 1840, has a 4-bay front elevation of flush boarding with hipped-roof portico to the left. The roof overhangs slightly, a feature which, with the hipped framing of the roof and the square bulk of the house, foreshadows the oncoming Italianate style. The Captain Samuel S. Woodruff House, 23 Old State Road, 1840, similar in mass and roof framing but with three bays, has lost some of its integrity through installation of replacement windows and the addition of a wide front porch. The Charles Cowles House, 1860, 131 West Main Street, is perhaps the most elaborate, having Corinthian columns in its front portico and tall Ionic columns in the porch of a recessed wing.

The Greek Revival-style type that is most common in Southington has a 3-bay front elevation under gable end treated as a pediment, such as the Levi B. Frost House. One of these structures, the Horace Webster Farmhouse, 577 South End Road, 1837, already is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (August 24, 1977). It differs from the Frost House in that

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# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

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United States Department of the Interlor National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT Section number \_\_\_\_\_8 Page \_\_1\_\_\_\_

it has corner pilasters and, in its tympanum, a semi-elliptical fanlight, which is a reminder of the outgoing Federal style.

The front elevation of the Frost House is a fine example of its type. The proportions of the components, the pitch of the roof, and the spacing of the fenestration all clearly bespeak the Greek Revival. While the house does not have corner pilasters nor columned portico, it does have a deeply recessed tympanum and rectangular window with stylistically correct muntin pattern. The recessed doorway is flanked by the expected plain pilasters and side lights, under plain frieze and projecting cornice cap. The tall first-floor windows are an anomaly since each is a single fixed sash. All the windows appear to be old but probably are replacements because 6-over-6 configuration would be expected in the 1830s, rather than the small panes of 12-over-12.

The interior of the front part of the house also demonstrates the characteristic Greek Revival plan of a hall in which the stairway rises on the left and a large front room is on the right. The detailing of the stairway treads, risers, railing, and handrail all appears to be original.

In the proportions of its ground plan the Frost House is not characteristic of the Greek Revival style nor of domestic architecture generally. It is too long for its width. The circumstance probably is somehow related to the earlier existence of the house as Barnes' Tavern. The gouged dado and separate exterior door of the rear room make it a strong candidate to have been the taproom of a tavern, but the structural relationship in time of one part of the house to another, or its growth, is not clear. Suffice it to say that the Levi D. Frost House in the form it assumed after the 1836 fire is characteristic of the Greek Revival style and a significant example of the type in Southington.

#### Historical Note

Asa Barns operated a tavern in his home on this site. Since he married Phobe Adkins in 1765 and, according to local legend, received his tavern license at about the same time, it may be that he built the structure, c. 1765. In any event, the tavern made its mark in history by virtue of visits that occurred in 1781 and 1782. NPS Form 10-900-e (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_

While en route from Newport to join General Washington in North Castle, New York, troops led by Comte de Rochambeau arrived at French Hill, as it is still known, near Asa Barnes' Tavern on June 26, 1781. Rochambeau used the tavern as his headquarters. The main encampment was across the street to the north. The stop was recorded in the journal of an officer, who drew a map (Copy attached) of the neighborhood showing the camp, Earnes' Tavern, and Judd Brook. Rochambeau remained on French Hill until June 30.

On the return journey from Yorktown Rochambeau again used the facilities of Barnes' Tavern on October 27, 1982.

After the Revolutionary War Asa Barns continued to live in the house until his death on March 3, 1819. His son and heir, Philo Barns, leaged the property in August of that year to Micah Rugg and Levi B. Frost, both of whom were to become famous as pioneers in the development of the bolt industry, a field in which Southington led the nation. The specific purpose Rugg and Frost had in mind when leasing the Barns property is not clear. Whether the tavern was still in operation is not known. Since the two men in the same year also leased land across the street on which to erect a dam on Judd Brook, the inference is that their intention was industrial. In 1820, Frost, alone, bought the house.

Frost was a blacksmith by trade. His smithy stood south of the brook. There he specialized in shoeing oxen, but also fabricated hand-forged products, including bolts. In addition, he conducted a general mercantile business in farmers' supplies. In 1839 Rugg, with another partner, established a shop for the production of bolts in the neighborhood, further south on Marion Avenue. While in business for himself, he secured the first patent for mechanically trimming bolt heads.<sup>5</sup> In 1842 Frost began the manufacture of bolts in a shop across the street from his house, doing business as L. B. Frost & Son.<sup>6</sup> The firm originated the first lathe for turning bolt heads. In 1844 nuts made from old boiler plates processed cold without heat were added to the line. Its 1855 price list, copy attached, shows the growth in variety of products manufactured by the Frost shop. The firm continued in businss until early in the 20th century.

There was a fire in the house in 1836, but the extent of the damage is unknown. After the fire the house was re-built for Levi B. Frost and assumed its present Greek Revival-style appearance. Frost died in 1865, but his family owned the house to 1913. An account of the dedication in 1912 of a monument erected to Rochambeau on French Hill, after which the principals fittingly enough were entertained at the Frost House on the site of Barnes' Tavern, reported that "The Fronst <u>/sic</u>/ house still retains the framework of the ancient tavern...." The WPA Census of Old Buildings form carries the comment "Front part burned at one time." NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interlor National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT Section number  $\underline{8}$  Page  $\underline{3}$ 

<sup>1</sup>. One evening festivities were held at the tavern, which an officer also recorded, saying, "We found many Americans and some pretty women in our camp. The Comte de Charlus gave a big dinner for the prettiest ones, followed by a ball that lasted all night." See Harold C. Rice, Jr., and Anne S.K. Brown, eds., <u>The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783, c vols.</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 1:248.

2. Southington Land Records, volume 10, page 563.

<sup>3</sup>·SLR 10/566.

<sup>4</sup> In 1825 Frost bought from Barnes adjoining land with sawmill. (SLR 12/72) The sawmill with dam was still standing in 1925. (Snapshot in possession of W. P. Yelenak) The dam further confirms the interest in controlling the power source on this section of Judd Brook.

<sup>5</sup> The nature of the relationship between Frost and Rugg is not clear, but in any event Rugg started out on his own. His business failed, and he went to work for Clark Bros. Bolt Co., which is still in business. The Frost company, then managed by Levi B. Frost's son Ira, bought Rugg's shop building, causing a family row. See E. S. Todd, <u>Looking Back 100</u> Years in Southington (Southington, Clark Bros. Bolt Co., nd). Apparently Levi B. Frost and Rugg came to a disagreement. The front elevation of Rugg's shop, considered to be the first building constructed in the United States for the manufacture of bolts, is now at the Southington Historical Society.

<sup>6</sup>. One of the buildings of the company remains standing. Masonry along the brook for the dam also still is in place.

<sup>7</sup> Heman R. Timlow, <u>Sketches of Southington, Conn.</u> (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1875; reprint ed., Southington: Southington Historical Society, 1976) p. 563.

<sup>8</sup> Minnie E. Wrinn, "Rochambeau Monument," <u>The Southington News</u>, August 23, 1935, pp. 1, 6.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Levi B. Frost House, Southington, CT Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9

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Levi B. Frost House Southington, CT First Floor Plan Photo keyO-7

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W.R. Wilbur, <u>History of the Bolt and Nut Industry of America</u> (Cleveland, 1905), p. 346.

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