

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0668362
FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 5 1978
DATE ENTERED OCT 11 1978
DATA SHEET

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

Pond-Weed House

AND/OR COMMON

The House under the hill; Half-Way House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2591 Post Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Darien

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Fairfield

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Terry G. Avery, Jacques Bouffier

STREET & NUMBER

2591 Post Road

CITY, TOWN

Darien

VICINITY OF

STATE

Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Darien Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Post Road

CITY, TOWN

Darien

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS see continuation sheet 1

TITLE

Connecticut Statewide Survey

DATE

1966

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Pond-Weed house is located on the north side of the Boston Post Road, in the part of Darien known as Noroton. The frame house faces south, just west of the junction of the Post Road and Hollow Tree Ridge Road. It currently has a suburban setting. Adjacent houses are free-standing and have recent construction dates.

The land on which the house is located slopes upward to the north and this topographic feature has given the house its familiar name - "The House Under the Hill". The building is set quite close to the street, separated from it by a stone wall and a shallow yard.

Foundations are rough fieldstone, as is the massive central chimney. The stack has a T-shaped plan and a shaped cap. A large tie-rod anchor in the shape of an S adorns the south face of the stack. A noticeable break in the slope of the rear roof line and the T shape of the chimney point to the early addition of a lean-to kitchen and fireplace.

The main (south) facade is regularly divided into five bays. It appears to have undergone some early 19th century remodelling. Federal features include the enlarged windowframes and simple overdoor transom above the six-panel door. Sash is double-hung and all are replacements. First story windows have been lengthened at the top to their present height, with 6/9 glazing. Second story sash are 6/6.

South and west exterior siding is beaded clapboards. The east side has been shingled over (probably 19th century), original clapboards remain beneath. The north side, lean-to, has shingles with semi-circular butts. These are probably among the few examples remaining on an early Connecticut house. A remarkable survival is the first period back door - vertical boards with rose-head nails set in a diamond pattern.

The plan is typical of a two-story, central chimney house with rear lean-to. It has a heavy timber frame with exposed corner posts, which on the second floor are of "Gunstock" shape. In all rooms except the parlor joists of the upper floor are exposed. Parlor beams are cased. The kitchen and two front rooms on the first floor have panelled chimney walls. Opening the chimney wall of the east room has revealed, behind an 18th century brick fireplace, an enormous fieldstone fireplace with an unusually large chestnut lintel, chamfered and with lambs-tongues. Evidence indicates that this was the original kitchen fireplace, with bake-oven. It was reduced in size and panelled over when the lean-to kitchen was added in the early 18th century. Parlor panelling and mantel date from the early 19th century, as does panelling of the entrance hall. Stairs run right to left and have 19th century banisters. There are no fireplaces on the second floor, where the internal walls are covered with vertical beaded sheathing of wide pine boards. Examples of early hardware are present. The third story (attic) exhibits characteristic common rafter construction; access stairs were remodelled in the early 20th century.

The house offers a rare example of a structure of the period without summer beams. In the east room, first floor, seven 5" by 8½" joists join the chimney girt and the first end girt. In the west room (parlor) plaster hides the same construction. In both east and west chambers, five 8 3/4" by 7½" joists join the front plate to the rear plate, paralleling the end girts. They are dovetailed in to the plates.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

Pond-Weed House, Darien Connecticut

Representation in existing surveys:

Works Projects Administration, Connecticut Survey
1930s State
Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Ct.

Old Houses of Connecticut: Colonial Dames Series

1942 State
Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Ct.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> _PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> _1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> _1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> _1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1700

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pond-Weed House, with its large stone central chimney and sloping rear roof-line, has the simplicity and sturdy vernacular vigor characteristic of early Connecticut architecture. After it was erected, very probably in the late 1690s, this frame structure received modifications, ca. 1716, which result in the existing two-story house with rear lean-to. Notable features include the massive stone chimney with T-shaped plan; an exterior wall of early shingles with semi-circular butts; a first period exterior door; exposed framing, panelling and much early hardware. The house was probably built by Nathaniel Pond and was sold by him to Nathaniel Weed in 1716. It remained in the Weed family for 210 years.

In 1696, Nathaniel Pond "Blacksmith of Branford" Connecticut bought the land on which the Pond-Weed house is located (Stamford Land Records, Book A, 269). He sold this land "with dwelling hous & barn" to Nathaniel Weed in 1716 (SLR, BookB, 248). Elmer Keith, an authority on early Connecticut architecture and compiler of "Old Houses of Connecticut", a survey sponsored by the Colonial Dames, 1942, believed the house was erected by Pond, since its framing features are similar to the Swain-Harrison house, built in Branford in 1687.

Nathaniel Weed, the second owner, was a member of a leading family which is still prominent in the area. He was a blacksmith and a large land owner. After his death in 1751 the house was inherited by his son John. It then passed in 1801 to his son, John II (still referred to locally as Gentleman John), at his death in 1852 he bequeathed the house to his daughters Mary E. and Sarah Ann Weed. The building remained in the Weed family until 1926 when it was sold to Agnes C. Bemish from whom it was acquired in 1948 by Walter L. Burrows. During the last fifty years the building began to show signs of deterioration which were of great concern to the community. In 1976 the property, at that time consisting of the house and .58 acres of land, was bought by the present owners; since then needed repairs have been undertaken.

Beside its architectural importance and its connection with a leading family, the fact that the building served as a tavern in the 18th century is a firm local tradition. It has borne a second popular name "The Half-way House" from its site between Stamford and Norwalk, by the ford and former sloop landing on the Noroton River. It has long been held that "George Washington stopped here" and recent research by a local historian (not yet published) has revealed supporting evidence.

This commercial use is of great local significance, since the only other tavern recorded in the community was demolished in 1962 and the mill and blacksmith shop were destroyed by fire in the 1920s - leaving this the last known commercial building of the period.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Darien Historical Society, Darien 1641-1820-1970: Historical Sketches, Essex CT. Pequot Press, 1970.
 Elmer Keith, compiler, "Pond Weed House" Old Houses of Connecticut, Colonial Dames Series 1942. Typewritten; in Ct. State Library
 Interview with Natalie P. Burrows, June 15, 1976. Notes in files of T. Robins Brown, Bear Mountain, N.Y.
 Files of the Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, Ct.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .58 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	6 2 5 7 9 0	4 4 5 4 6 2 5 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Janet G. Jainschigg, Pres. S. P. N. E. A.
 ORGANIZATION

DATE

Connecticut Historical Commission
 STREET & NUMBER

October 1977

TELEPHONE

59 South Prospect St.
 CITY OR TOWN

203-566-3005
 STATE

Hartford

Conn.

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

John W. Jainschigg

TITLE DIRECTOR, CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

DATE 5/1/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William P. Burrows

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST William P. Burrows

DATE October 10, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER