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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cosier-Murphy House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 67, Route 39 NA not for publication
city, town New Fairfield NA vicinity
state CT code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code 06812

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 6/27/91
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] 7/31/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

foundation STONE/granite

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Cosier-Murphy House is a small, plain Greek Revival farmhouse located in the Miller's Corner section of New Fairfield. Sited on a bank overlooking the road, the two-story side-hall-plan house retains original structural components and finishes, both interior and exterior, to an unusual degree.

The house consists of an 18' x 22' two-story gable-roofed block with one-story shed-roofed extensions to the sides and rear. In the three-bay facade, the doorway in the south bay (see first-floor plan, Figure 1) is surrounded by plain architrave, frieze, and cornice. It has an original door of two vertical panels. (Photograph 2) Windows are 6-over-6 at the first floor, 3-over-3 at the second. Clapboards, original, are chestnut with square, not tapered, edges. At the second floor, sheathing is smooth horizontal tongue-in-groove boards. Pilasters at the corners of the house are one-story high, supporting the flush boarding above, which may be regarded as a wide frieze. (Photograph 3) The gable-end pediment is covered with clapboards, with wide plain friezes under the raking cornices. There is no attic window.

On each side elevation, about two-thirds of the way back, the width of the house projects four feet, one story high, under a shed roof. (Photographs 4, 5) In the south wing there is a second, or side, door of two vertical panels, similar to the front door. A third one-story shed-roofed section runs across the rear of the main block, its roof joined to the roofs of the wings by hips. These three components of the house appear to be original. A shed-roofed porch, not original but replacing an earlier porch in its place, runs across the back of the house. The earlier porch abutted a barn, no longer standing, whose stone foundations are seen at the left in Photograph 5.

A second large barn, whose stone foundations also remain in place, stood north of the house close to the road. According to tradition, which is supported by the land records,² cows were kept in the barn. They grazed on the two acres adjacent to the house and two acres across the street that went with the house prior to 1970. A small free-standing building near the southwest corner of the house (Photographs 4, 5) was used for hanging meat; it has a plaster ceiling.

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At the front of the house, stone walks lead from the front and side doors to the gate in the picket fence, resting on a stone base, which is known to have existed from at least the early 20th century.³ Beyond the fence two-tier stone steps permitted stepping directly into a carriage, or down to grade. A stone hitching post is nearby. When this convenient arrangement was built, grade for the road was higher than it is now.

On the interior, the principal room is the kitchen, now used as the living room. (Photograph 7) Located behind the central chimney, its fireplace has a brick firebox with crane, and to the right, a beehive oven over ash pit, concealed by a wooden door. In the wall to the right of the fireplace are doors to stairways down to the basement, a straight run, and up to the second floor, with winders. To the left of the fireplace is a hallway to the front door, and to the left of the hall is the side door to the exterior. The front and side doors have the same pattern on the interior as on the exterior. (Photograph 8)

The front room is the parlor. Its chief decorative feature is a Greek Revival mantel. (Photograph 9) The parlor door has the same two vertical panels as the exterior doors on the side facing the hall (Photograph 10), but its inside surface is beaded boards. This arrangement is followed in other first-floor interior doors; second-floor doors are batten. Window trim in the parlor is flat stock with band moldings and with horizontal panels under the sills. Elsewhere, window trim is plain.

The dining room, with chair-rail molding, occupies the southeast corner. (Photograph 11) The bathroom is in front of the dining room, and the present kitchen is in space initially used as a pantry. The chief feature of the back porch is the well, still the water supply source for the house. A wooden housing over the top of the well is at the west end of the porch. A dug (as opposed to an artesian) well, it is two feet in diameter at the top, 20 feet deep, and eight feet in diameter at the bottom.⁴

There are three small bedrooms on the second floor, two in the front, one on the west toward the rear. Because of the low height of the house, the bedroom ceilings slope down at the sides. (Photograph 12) Each bedroom has a tiny closet.

The basement walls, under the main block, are rubble stone, supporting the large cur granite blocks which are the foundations visible from the exterior. The square chimney base is built of layered stone and timbers. (Photograph 13)

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Original details and finishes abound throughout the house. Walls and ceilings are plaster. Window glass and hardware appear to be original. There are only two doorknobs in the house, on the front door and the parlor door; all other doors are fitted with latches. One mortise-and-tenon join with peg is known to exist,⁵ and a shoulder post may be seen in the bathroom.

A frame two-car garage with pyramidal roof, built c. 1950, stands north of the house, and is considered to be non-contributing.

1. Based on evaluation of the framing by Paul Fako, the owner, who is a carpenter/builder by trade.
2. New Fairfield Land Records, volume 1, page 449, October 25, 1887, conveying the property from Daniel Murphy to Elizabeth Murphy, reads in part, "Also all my personal property consisting of one horse and carriage, two business wagons, five cows...."
3. Interview, February 6, 1991, with Martha Fairchild (1904-), Librarian of the New Fairfield Public Library, who visited overnight in the house when she was a young person.
4. Information of Paul Fako.
5. Observation of Paul Fako.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
c. 1840

Significant Dates
c. 1840

Cultural Affiliation
NA

Significant Person
NA

Architect/Builder
NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Cosier-Murphy House is significant architecturally because it is a good example of a small side-hall-plan Greek Revival farmhouse, with uncommon architectural features, that is substantially unaltered since it was built. The state of preservation of the house is unusually fine; its structural components as well as its details and finishes are in essentially original condition. It is among the best-preserved houses in New Fairfield.

Historical Background

The area of New Fairfield was settled in 1728 by families from Fairfield who struck out to the north as part of the pattern of migration from the coastline to the inland. The town was incorporated in 1740, and long remained a rural community. The Cosier-Murphy House is one of the few farmhouses still extant from that era. The population in 1800 was 1665, in 1938, 434. An event of importance to historians occurred in 1867 when the town records burned. The absence of land records prior to 1867 makes it difficult to trace the history of the Crosier-Murphy House.

The earliest documentary evidence related to the Cosier-Murphy House is the 1867 Beers Atlas (Figure 2), which shows D. Murphy next door to W.T. Cosier. Daniel Murphy (1829-1892), born in Ireland, came to America in 1839. He married Mary Dugan (1825-1885), who also was born in Ireland.¹ Murphy came to New Fairfield at an unknown date and was in residence at the house bearing his name on the atlas sometime before 1867.² Then, in 1880, Daniel Murphy bought from Phoebe Cosier, widow of William T. Cosier (1810-1880), the Cosier house with two acres of land and the buildings thereon, the nominated property.³ The Murphys' first house subsequently burned. W.T. Cosier is shown by his obituary and by the inventory of his estate to have been a farmer. For the successors on his farm to have been the Murphy family, Irish immigrants, was somewhat unusual at the time.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.75

UTM References

A 18 627410 45191800
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in New Fairfield Land Records at volume 105, page 51.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The property boundary has not changed since the earliest available land records entry in 1880.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title David F. Ransom, Consultant

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date February 23, 1991

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 566-3005

city or town Hartford state CT zip code 06106

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After Daniel Murphy deeded the property to his daughter Elizabeth (1862-) in 1887,⁴ she conveyed the house to her sister, Mary W. Bates.⁵ The property descended in the Bates family until purchased by the present owners in 1970.⁶

The first Roman Catholic mass to be celebrated in New Fairfield, according to family tradition cited by Joseph R. Bates, a descendant of Daniel Murphy, was said in the Cosier-Murphy House by a traveling priest sometime after 1880.

Architecture

The Cosier-Murphy House is typical of side-hall-plan Greek Revival houses because of its three-bay front elevation under gable-end pediment. The doorway surround is also typical: flanking plain pilasters support a plain architrave and frieze. But the modest height of the house is not typical and the way the low second story is arranged is ingenious. Instead of having horizontal frieze-band windows in a conventional manner, the depth of the frieze is much increased, permitting larger fenestration and the 3-over-3 sash. The result is an unusual design that brings far more light to the second-floor bedrooms than the conventional design.

The design of the house also is unusual because of the three shed-roofed extensions to the sides and rear, believed to have been original. The fact that these extensions are not easily read by the floor plan (Figure 2) is further testimony to the skill of the builder. The front parlor opens off the hall just inside the front door as might be expected, but the kitchen is located in the center of the house instead of at the back, the south wing is simply part of the kitchen space, and the dining room uses spaces both in the north wing, the main block, and the rear extension; the expected corner walls of the main block simply do not exist.

The basic fine design of the house is enhanced by the high quality workmanship of its construction and details. The wealth of two-vertical-panel doors, showing marks of hand planing, is matched by the presence of original hardware throughout. Original plaster walls and oak flooring, complete in every respect, add to the distinction of the house and celebrate its high state of historic preservation. The solid condition of the framing, which is free from the usual ravages of time due to rot and insect damage, bears testimony to the faithful care of the builder and subsequent occupants. (Photograph 14)

In the words of Martha Fairchild, who has been surveying the local scene since 1904, "Most of the houses in town have been changed. This one has not."⁷

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¹Commemorative Biographical Record of Fairfield County, Connecticut,
Chicago: J.H. Beers & Company, 1894, p. 1096.

²Joseph R. Bates, interview, February 17, 1991.

³New Fairfield Land Records, volume 1, page 372, September 2, 1880.

⁴NFLR, 1/449, October 25, 1887.

⁵NFLR 3/506, July 22, 1895.

⁶NFLR 105/51, September 23, 1970.

⁷Martha Fairchild, interview, February 6, 1991.

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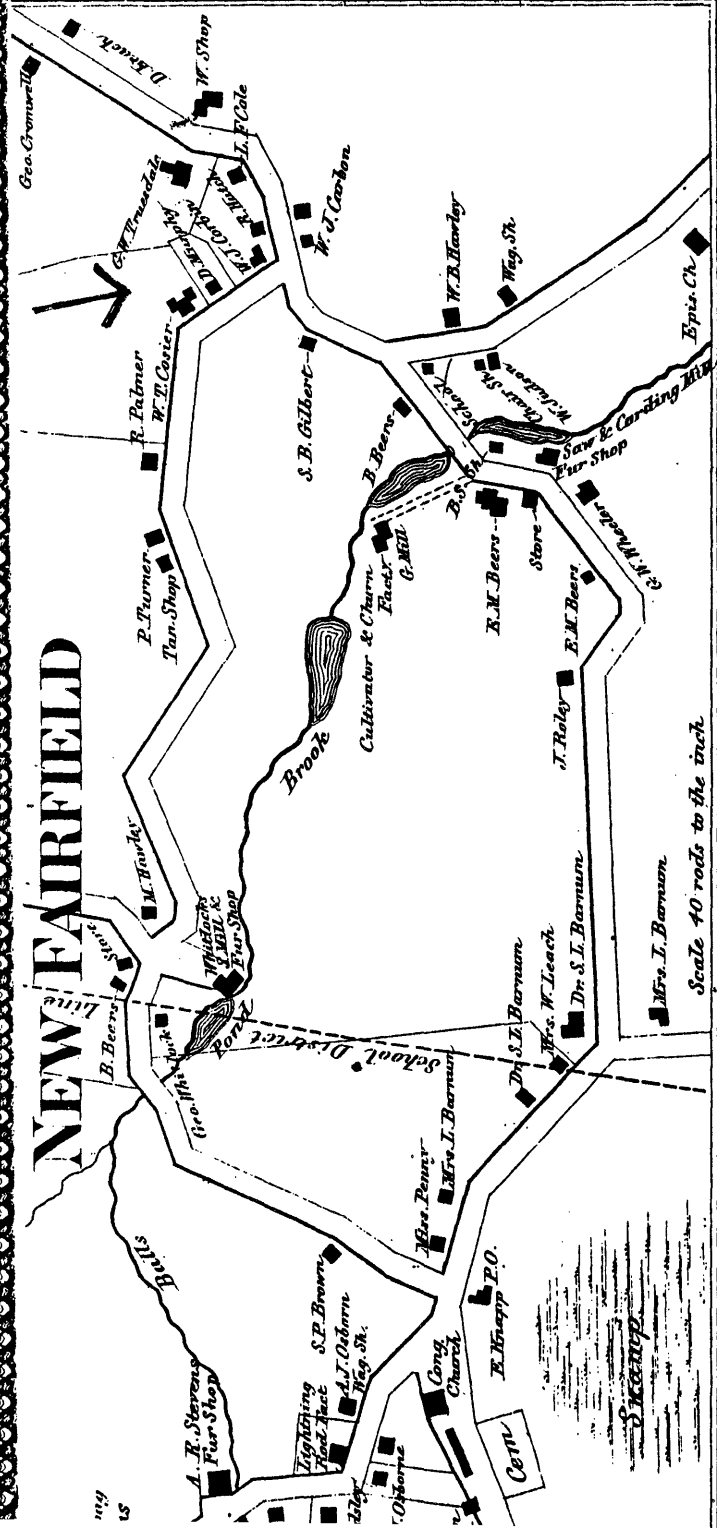
Bibliography

- Bates, Joseph R., descendant of Daniel Murphy. Interview, February 17, 1991.
- Beers, F.W. Atlas of New York and Vicinity. New York, 1867.
- Commemorative Biographical Record of Fairfield County, Connecticut.
Chicago: J.H. Beers & Company, 1899.
- Cosier, William T. Obituary, Danbury News, July 28, 1880. U.S. Census Record, 1880. Estate inventory, Danbury Probate Records, volume 34, page 303.
- Fairchild, Martha (1904-), Librarian of New Fairfield Public Library and life-time resident of the town. Interview, February 6, 1991.
- Fako, Paul and Gertrude, owners of the Cosier-Murphy House.
Interviews, January 31 and February 6, 1991.
- New Fairfield Land Records 1/372, 1/449, 3/278, 3/506, 40/14, 105/51.
- Simon, Irving B. Our Town, The History of New Fairfield. New Fairfield Bicentennial Commission, 1975.

NEW FAIRFIELD

1867

Business Directory for New Fairfield.
Pearce, A. S., P. O. and Grocery Store, Balls Pond.
Beers, E. M., Dealer in Dry Goods and Groceries.
Ballard, David, Prop'r Saw and Grist Mills.
Beers, Benj., Churn and Cultivator Factory.
Beardsley, A. F., Manufacturer of Lightning Rods.
Beert, Bradley, Dealer in Groceries, &c.
Hawley & Son, Manufr's Carriages and Wagons.
Osborne, A. J. " "
Truesdale, G. W., Manufr of Carriages and Wagons.
Wheeler, Geo. W., Wool Carder, Fur Picker, &c.
Whitlock, Geo. Saw Mill, Fur Picking, &c.



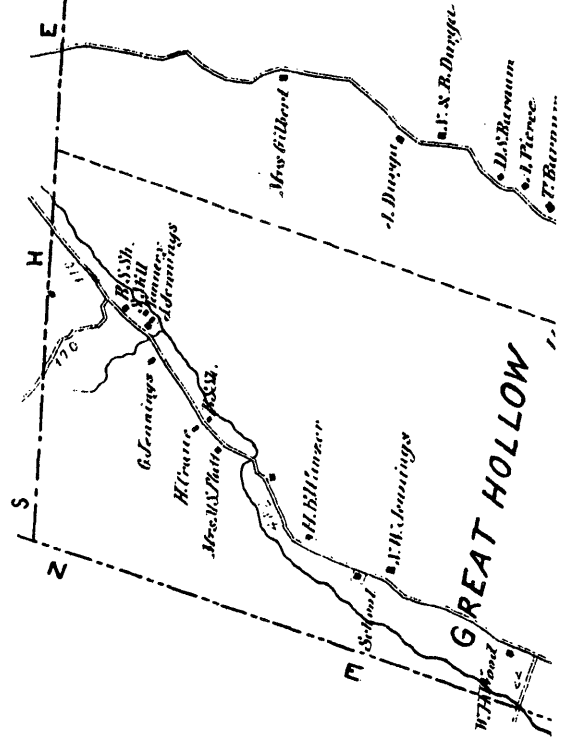
Scale 40 rods to the inch

TOWN OF

NEW FAIRFIELD

Fairfield Co. Conn.

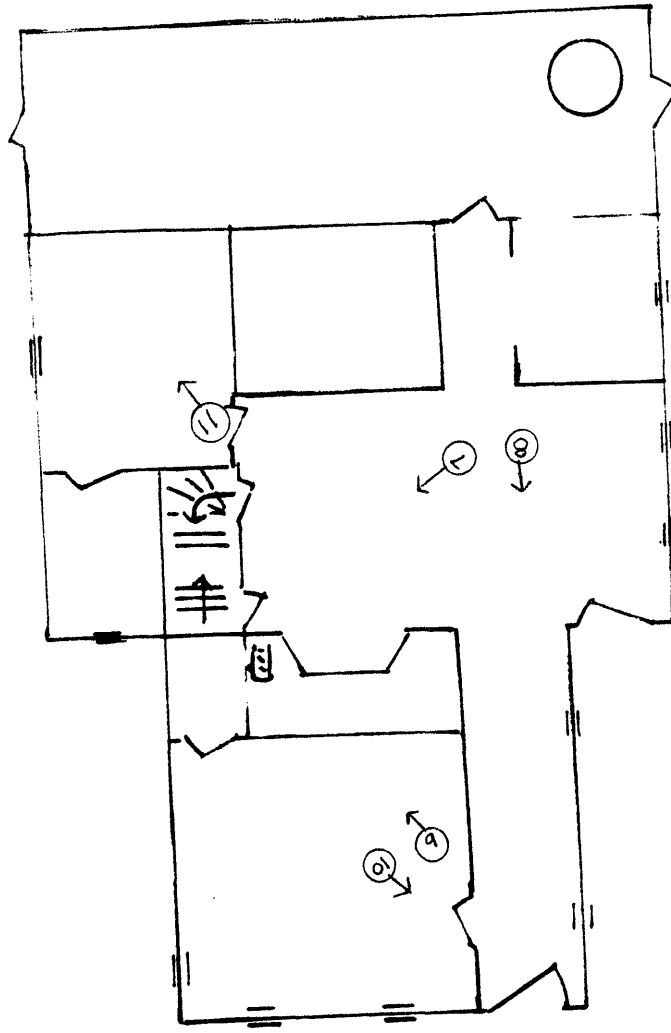
Scale 2 Inches to the Mile.



Cosier - Murphy House
New Fairfield, CT

F.W. Beers, Atlas of New York
and Vicinity, 1867, Plate 49.

Figure 1



Cosier- Murphy House
New Fairfield, CT

PLAN
Photo Key

Scale: 1" = 8.5'

Z ← ———

Figure 2

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Photographs were taken by David F. Ransom in February, 1991. Negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. View southeast | 12. Front corner bedroom, |
| 2. Detail of Photograph 1 | 13. Chimney base, view
northeast |
| 3. Detail of Photograph 1 | 14. First-floor framing,
view northwest |
| 4. View north | |
| 5. View southwest | |
| 6. Stone steps
view southeast | |
| 7. Kitchen, view northwest | |
| 8. Side door, hall,
front door, view west | |
| 9. Parlor mantel shelf,
view northeast | |
| 10. Parlor door,
view southwest | |
| 11. Dining room,
view northeast | |