

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000783 Date Listed: 08/01/96

Little Haddam Historic District Middlesex CT
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

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, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for [Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

8/1/96
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Criteria Considerations

Criteria exception A applies because of the importance of the district's Congregational meetinghouse and the historic district's significance in the area of "religion."

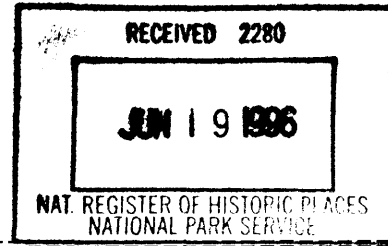
This information was confirmed with John Herzan , National Register Coordinator, CTSHPPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

783

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: LITTLE HADDAM HISTORIC DISTRICT

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: East Haddam Road, Orchard Road, and Town Street

city/town: East Haddam not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Middlesex code: 015 zip code: 06423

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>19</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>20</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See cont. sheet.

John W. Shannahan 6/13/96
Signature of certifying official Date
John W. Shannahan, 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

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- 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): _____

Betty L. Savage 8/1/96

fr Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use
=====

Historic:	<u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub:	<u> single dwelling </u>
	<u> COMMERCE/TRADE </u>		<u> professional, business </u>
	<u> RELIGION </u>		<u> religious structure </u>
	<u> GOVERNMENT </u>		<u> town hall </u>
Current:	<u> DOMESTIC </u>	Sub:	<u> single dwelling </u>
	<u> COMMERCE/TRADE </u>		<u> professional, business </u>
	<u> RELIGION </u>		<u> religious structure </u>
	<u> GOVERNMENT </u>		<u> town hall </u>

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

Colonial
Federal
Greek Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD other N/A
BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance
=====

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
ART
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
RELIGION

Period(s) of Significance: c.1700-1905

Significant Dates: See Item 7

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: see Item 7

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description	Little Haddam Historic District East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT	7-2
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In the inventory of properties that follows, the count of contributing buildings (C) includes houses, barns, and other outbuildings that retain their historic appearance; conversely, the count of noncontributing buildings (NC) includes houses and outbuildings that appear to be of relatively recent construction. Historic names and dates were compiled from the local historic district report and signs and names placed on houses. Other dates are estimates by the preparers of this form, based primarily on architectural features.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Little Haddam Historic District 7-5
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	C	NC
484 Town Street	EAST HADDAM GRANGE HALL, 1905, 1 1/2 stories, cobblestone basement story (1922), clapboards, hip-roof front porch on turned posts, two-over-two sash, round-arched gable window. Photograph 9.	1	0
492 Town Street	EAST HADDAM TOWN HALL, 1857, 1 1/2 stories, clapboards, small portico supported on carved brackets sheltering front entry, semi-elliptical fanlight in gable end, nine-over-nine sash.	1	0
496 Town Street	SAMUEL EMMONS HOUSE, c.1696 (date traditional), 2 1/2 stories, clapboards, five-bay facade, central entry with sidelights, six-over-nine sash, large brick central chimney, side ell. Tavern, 1771-1797 and 1863-1894. Photograph 1.	1	0
499 Town Street	FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1794, Federal-style, Lavius Fillmore, architect. Five-bay gable-end facade with three center bays brought forward. Center entry has pilaster-and-lintel surround, with smaller arched entries on either side. Full return of modillioned cornice; semi-circular window in gable. Quoins. Windows have fifteen-over-fifteen sash. Arched windows on second story. Steeple made up of tall base stage with quoins, replaced belfry and spire (1906). District school foundation (1821) nearby. Photographs 6 and 7.	1	0

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Little Haddam Historic District 7-6
 East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	C	NC
502 Town Street	FRANCIS MASON PALMER HOUSE, c.1860. Greek Revival-style, 2 1/2 stories, clapboards, three-bay gable-end facade with full cornice return, flush-boarded gable, wide corner pilasters, six-over- six sash, side ell; front entry has pilaster-and-lintel surround, recessed doorway set behind two free-standing columns, sidelights, and transom. Photograph 3.	1	0

SITE

489 Town Street	FIRST CHURCH CEMETERY, 1788, numerous markers with soul effigies from 18th century, along with marble and granite stones from later periods. Photograph 8.	1	0
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance

Little Haddam Historic District
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

8-1

Summary

The Little Haddam Historic District has historical significance because the area it embraces served as a religious, political, and social focus for the town of East Haddam for many years (Criterion A). Little Haddam is the site of the first of the town's Congregational meetinghouses, along with one of the town's earliest burying grounds. The meetinghouse formed the nucleus around which a small cluster of buildings coalesced, with a district school, stores, the shops of artisans, doctors' offices, and taverns. Because the village was located on a relatively busy road, early enterprises could expect the patronage of both travelers and the farmers who gathered there for weekly religious services. The current meetinghouse and its predecessors also served secular purposes, accommodating town meetings until 1796. The town meetings returned to Little Haddam beginning in 1857, in a town hall built expressly for that purpose. Social activities for which Little Haddam provided a venue included militia companies, which in the 18th and early 19th centuries held their training musters in a broad expanse of land surrounding Town Street, and later the Grange, which held an annual fair in Little Haddam and met in the town hall prior to building its own social hall in 1905.

The district also has significance because of the artistic and architectural qualities of its components (Criterion C). Grave markers are now recognized as a major medium of artistic expression in early New England culture; Little Haddam's First Church Cemetery is rich in late 18th-century stones, with more than a dozen by Silas Brainerd, one of the period's master carvers. The meetinghouse of the First Church of Christ is an early and well-preserved example of a building form that came to epitomize the early 19th-century New England village: the white-painted, Classically detailed church with a portico and spire. The meetinghouse was the work of Lavius Fillmore, an influential architect-builder of the period. Finally, several of the houses in the Little Haddam Historic District represent well-preserved examples of particular styles of architecture, including the vernacular style of the Colonial period, the Federal Style, and the Greek Revival Style.

Historical Role of Little Haddam

The area that became the town of East Haddam was originally part of Haddam, most of which now lies west of the Connecticut River. European settlement began in the 1670s, and by 1704 the families on the

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Significance Little Haddam Historic District East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT 8-3

If Little Haddam today seems small for having been East Haddam's original town center, that can be explained by the appearance of other villages within the town that competed with it in one or more ways. Millington, for example, duplicated many of the functions of Little Haddam when it became the location of the town's second Congregational society around 1740; the village that grew up around Millington Green was very similar to Little Haddam, with a meetinghouse, a district school, and a few houses, taverns, and stores. In 1796, perhaps reflecting some rivalry, the town built a new building for town meetings at Mount Parnassus, halfway between Little Haddam and Millington. By the last part of the 18th century, most of East Haddam's commercial activity and much of its population growth was occurring at the two landings on the Connecticut River, and shortly after 1800, early industrial enterprises made Moodus into a distinct village.

Despite lacking a dynamic for growth, Little Haddam continued serving a central role in the town throughout the 19th century. Lending some economic sustenance were the East Haddam and Colchester Turnpike, which was chartered in 1809 and ran along Orchard and East Haddam Roads, and the tannery business, which continued until 1866. Public meetings returned to the village in 1857, when a new town hall was built. Starting in 1887, the Grange brought the town's farming families together in Little Haddam for social occasions, meeting first in the town hall and later in its own building. Little Haddam even had its own post office in 1894, though it was discontinued only 13 years later.

Today the buildings within the Little Haddam Historic District continue to recall the village's role in the town's history. The village's origins in the early 18th century are made obvious by the several well-preserved colonial houses associated with the Spencer, Emmons, and other early families. Little Haddam's importance as a center for religious activity is underscored by the meetinghouse and the Reverend Isaac Parsons House, which served as the Congregational parsonage until 1964. The meetinghouse also recalls the political life of the village, as does the 1857 town hall. Finally, the social activities that occurred in the village are memorialized by the Grange Hall.

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Significance Little Haddam Historic District
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

8-4

Architectural Significance

Many of the buildings in the Little Haddam Historic District embody the distinguishing characteristics of particular periods and styles of architecture. For example, four of the district's oldest houses exhibit the clapboarded exteriors, gable roofs, small-pane divided sash, and three-bay or five-bay center-chimney form that characterized the domestic architecture of colonial-era Connecticut (Photograph 1).

The Little Haddam Historic District also offers an exceptionally finely detailed and well-preserved example of the Federal style of architecture, the Reverend Isaac Parsons House at 482 Town Street, built in 1817. The house illustrates the delicate interpretation of Classical motifs that was at the heart of the style, a principle that is evident in such features as its slender corner pilasters and its small-scale cornice ornamentation, which is repeated in the front-entry portico (Photograph 2). The semi-elliptical fanlight over the doorway recalls a favored shape of the period, the ellipse. The transom is also notable for its leaded glass, which first came into wide use in the early 19th century.

The more boldly proportioned Classicism introduced in the Greek Revival period is reflected in the house that Francis Palmer built in Little Haddam around 1855 (Photograph 3). Its wide corner pilasters, full cornice return, and pilaster-and-lintel entrance treatment are typical Greek Revival features that were common throughout the Connecticut countryside in the middle of the 19th century. Palmer's position as the owner of a thriving tannery may be reflected in the freestanding columns that flank the house's front door, a better-than-ordinary detail that furthers the house's connections to the architecture of ancient Greece.

Of all the district's buildings, however, the one that is the most architecturally outstanding is the Congregational meetinghouse. It represents an early (1794) expression of a type that dominated New England church architecture for several decades thereafter. Unlike the plainly detailed meetinghouses of the colonial period, which had the entrance on the broad side and only occasionally a steeple (usually a subsequent addition), the new form had end entrances, an integral steeple, and rich architectural detailing. Quoins, modillions, and Classical cornices all gave the meetinghouse an air of elegance that was appropriate for the community's most important building, the center of spiritual and (for at least a few years) political life.

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Significance Little Haddam Historic District
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

8-5

The man responsible for the building's design and construction was Lavius Fillmore, born in 1767 in Norwich, Connecticut. Fillmore also designed and built the meetinghouse in Norwichtown, which greatly resembles the East Haddam church in form and details, particularly the combination of round-arched and rectangular openings, as well as Middletown's First Congregational Church (now greatly altered into a commercial building). Fillmore is credited with popularizing the articulation of the central bays as a distinct entity, a feature which was introduced by Charles Bulfinch's 1792 Taunton meetinghouse and which became nearly universal for early 19th-century New England meetinghouses. In addition to completing these early and influential late 18th-century churches, Fillmore produced several more in his adopted state of Vermont in subsequent years.

Artistic Significance

Gravestone carving in the 18th and early 19th centuries represented one of that culture's major mediums for artistic expression. The genre was rich in spiritual iconography, derived from the colonists' centuries-old European Christian heritage. In addition to symbols of death (bones, hourglass, coffins), life (roses), and resurrection (crowns, sun), early gravestone carvings made use of obscure references to philosophy, such as the serpent-bird, a metaphor for the perfect Christian who combined rationality with tender emotions. Some motifs were layered with multiple meanings: the grapevine, for example, symbolized both the mystical body of Christ ("I am the vine; you are the branches") and the vineyard of earthly labors from which the deceased was set free. The most common design was the use of a winged soul effigy for the upper part of the stone, either with a death's head or with a more human or cherubic face. Within the overall type, there was ample room for the individual expression of the carvers, each of whom developed certain favored combinations of elements and, in most cases, an approach to the winged soul effigy that served as a signature.

With almost 40 examples, Little Haddam's burying ground is particularly well-endowed with this characteristic New England art form. Among the notable carvers represented there are John Isham (1757-1834) and Silas Brainerd (1767-1854). Brainerd was a resident of East Haddam, where he worked as a stonecutter, mason, and carver of grave markers; he also is known to have built at least one stone-arch bridge. His sons Silas, Jr., and Erastus Brainerd operated one of the large brownstone quarries

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Significance

Little Haddam Historic District
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

8-6

in Portland, Connecticut. One authority on the form has judged the senior Brainerd to be "an artist of the first caliber." (Slater, 158). Silas Brainerd is best known for his characteristic soul effigy, in which he carved a head in profile, perhaps intending portraiture or at least some resemblance to the particular deceased person. Little Haddam's burying ground has 14 Brainerd stones, of which eight are "spectacular and haunting profiles."

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office Connecticut Historical Commission
- Other state agency 59 South Prospect Street
- Federal agency Hartford, Connecticut 06106
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: approx. 75 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A B
C D

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

The boundary is shown on the accompanying map, scale 1"=200'.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary was chosen so as to include the concentration of contiguous historic buildings at the Little Haddam village center.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, edited by John Herzan, Conn. Hist. Commission

Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: June 10, 1995

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT Zip: 06106

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Geographical Data Little Haddam Historic District 10-1
 East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

UTM REFERENCES:

- 1: 18.712600.4595100
- 2: 18.713200.4595220
- 3: 18.713100.4595210
- 4: 18.713510.4595420
- 5: 18.713520.4595320
- 6: 18.713460.4595190
- 7: 18.713310.4594950
- 8: 18.713420.4594840
- 9: 18.713480.4594600
- 10: 18.713300.4594580
- 11: 18.713280.4594680
- 12: 18.713200.4594660
- 13: 18.713180.4594750
- 14: 18.713120.4594740
- 15: 18.713070.4594930
- 16: 18.712720.4594860
- 17: 18.712720.4594950
- 18: 18.712640.4594940

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Photographs Little Haddam Historic District Photos-1
East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT

All photographs:

1. Little Haddam Historic District
2. East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT
3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
4. May, 1995
5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

Captions:

House at 496 Town Street, camera facing east
Photograph 1 of 10

Detail of doorway at 482 Town Street, camera facing east
Photograph 2 of 10

House at 502 Town Street, camera facing northeast
Photograph 3 of 10

House at 14 East Haddam Road, camera facing southeast
Photograph 4 of 10

House at 479 Town Street, camera facing southwest
Photograph 5 of 10

First Church of Christ, camera facing southwest
Photograph 6 of 10

Entry detail, First Church of Christ, camera facing west
Photograph 7 of 10

First Church Cemetery, camera facing west
Photograph 8 of 10

Town Grange at 484 Town Street, camera facing northeast
Photograph 9 of 10

Noncontributing house at 90 Orchard Road, camera facing southeast
Photograph 10 of 10