

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUL 23 1985

date entered AUG 23 1985

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

1. Name

historic John Wilson House

and/or common John Wilson House

2. Location

street & number 11 Ashland Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Griswold

vicinity of Jewett City

state Connecticut

code 09

county New London

code 011

3. Classification

Category

district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

public
 private
 both
Public Acquisition
 in process
 being considered
N/A

Status

occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress
Accessible
 yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military
 museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other:

4. Owner of Property

name John E. and Virginia L. Hoddy

street & number 11 Ashland Street

city, town Griswold

vicinity of Jewett City

state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Griswold Town Clerk

street & number 50 School Street

city, town Jewett City

state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

State Register of Historic
title Places

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975

federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford

state Connecticut

(continued)

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date c. 1873-1885
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Wilson House is a two-story, five-bay, gable-roofed house of the central-chimney type (Photograph 1). Originally rectangular in shape, its configuration has been altered by two small additions, one located at each end of the south (rear) wall. The house is located on the south side of Ashland Street to the east of Main Street (Photograph 6). It was moved to this location from the corner lot on Main and Ashland Streets c. 1873-1885 (Photograph 7). Although the chimney and fireplaces were lost due to the move, much of the house remains intact.

The facade of the house is marked by a slightly projecting center pavilion (Photograph 4). Two two-story pilasters set on pedestals support an open pediment with an elliptical wooden ornament at its center; the cornice is denticulated. The remainder of the center pavilion has been slightly altered. The front entry consists of an open pediment with blocky denticulation at its cornice, atop a shallow bracketed flat roof. The house was partitioned into two halves after its move, creating the need for two separate front doors. Two newer doors with elongated, arched glazing replace the original. The doors and the bracketed roof above them are Italianate in style and reflect the popularity of that style at the time of the move. A pair of four-over-four sash, simply encased in wood and located above the entry, replace the original window and further reflect the division of the house.

The facade is also distinguished by a pair of pilasters, one at either corner of the front of the house (Photograph 1). The cornice is denticulated; there is a slight overhang of the gable ends. Both ends are pedimented with short cornice returns; each contains a pair of original twelve-over-twelve sash. Sash throughout the rest of the house are six-over-six, all with plain wood surrounds. Second-floor windows abut the cornice.

The clapboard exterior is generally intact. The original field-stone foundation, visible from the inside of the cellar, was reinforced with cut stone on the exterior at the time of the move. This is especially evident at the eastern end of the house (Photograph 3). The house was moved from a flat surface to a downgrade and additional stone was used to keep the house level. A cellar entry was added to the exterior, using the original front door (Photograph 5).

Two southern additions contain secondary entries and are separated by an open porch. An 1868 map (Photograph 7) shows two ells to the rear of the house but it is not clear whether they were moved with the house. The present ells (Photograph 8) appear to be later additions.

The interior of the house has been changed because of the move and the subsequent partitioning (Photograph 9). The central chimney and fireplaces had to be dismantled. At this time, narrow brick flues were built utilizing much of the original chimney brick. The flues, used for the newer heating systems, were placed at the center of each half of the house; from the outside they resemble a pair of interior chimneys (Photograph 1). The porch and sections of the floor that contained the fireplaces were rebuilt using a mixture of original and

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Continuation sheet John Wilson House
Jewett City, CT

Item numbers 6 and 7

Page 1

Item Number 6 (continued):

Southeastern Connecticut Region; 1968; county; Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency; 139 Boswell Avenue, Norwich, Connecticut.

Item Number 7 (continued):

newer floor boards. The building of the partition itself, which runs from north to south down the center of the house, resulted in the removal of the original staircase; both the chimney and this staircase have been replaced by a newer pair of stairs. Some restoration in 1963 resulted in a few further changes; floor boards from the eastern half of the attic were used to replace the floor boards in the room to the south (rear) of this side of the house. The original floor in the front room to the west was covered with hardwood at this time.

Despite these alterations, many interior features remain intact. Original, wide floor boards can be found throughout the rest of the house. Floor boards in the hallways and in one bedroom at the southeast corner of the house are in exceptionally good condition. These boards measure from thirteen to seventeen inches in width in the bedroom, and from four to twelve inches in width throughout the rest of the house. Most of these boards retain their original large-headed nails although some have been reinforced with more modern hardware. Original interior trim can be found in the northernmost rooms of the house. The two first-floor rooms have molded baseboards and ceiling molds. Windows in these rooms have molded sills which extend around the outer walls to form chair rails (Photograph 10). Tracks are formed along these outer walls by the chair rails at the bottom and the ceiling molds at the top. These tracks originally held sliding shutters which have since been removed. First-floor rooms to the south have simpler chair rails and unadorned windows. The northern, second-floor rooms contain windows with molded surrounds and also have chair rails on their outer walls; these details, however, are less elaborate than their first-floor counterparts. All visible posts and beams have original, simple casing except in the cellar and attic where all beams are exposed; some are chamfered.

A small horse shed stands to the south of the house and is now used as a garage. Its post and beam construction and original clapboard exterior suggest it was built about the same time as the main house and was probably moved, along with the house, to its present location.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
..... prehistoric	..... archeology-prehistoric	..... community planning	..... landscape architecture	..... religion
..... 1400-1499	..... archeology-historic	..... conservation	..... law	..... science
..... 1500-1599	..... agriculture	..... economics	..... literature	..... sculpture
..... 1600-1699	X architecture	..... education	..... military	..... social/
X 1700-1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian
X 1800-1899	..... commerce	X exploration/settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater
..... 1900-	..... communications	..... industry	..... politics government	..... transportation
		..... invention		..... other (specify)

Criteria B, C

Specific dates built c. 1781-1782 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Wilson House, built c. 1781-1782, is significant for its historic connection to Captain John Wilson, an early settler in Jewett City who was directly involved with the early industrial development of Jewett City and, consequently, influenced development throughout the Griswold area (Criterion B). Built for Captain Wilson and his bride, Lydia Jewett Wilson, the house reflected the growing importance of its owners. Locally distinguished, its centered pavilion, two-story pilasters, and well preserved woodwork mark it as a good example of late Georgian architecture. It is also significant as one of Jewett City's finer homes and thus has architectural significance as well (Criterion C). Although it was moved from its original site in the late nineteenth century, it is the only surviving structure in Jewett City that is so intrinsically associated with Captain John Wilson.

Historical Significance

John Wilson, a Massachusetts native, came to Jewett City to work for Eliezer Jewett, an early (1771) settler and founder of the town that would later be named for him. Jewett owned a saw mill, grist mill, and fulling mill, all of which Wilson helped manage and eventually acquired. Wilson, who married Jewett's daughter Lydia in 1782, built his new residence between 1781 and the time of his marriage. In 1790, Wilson began to operate a fulling mill and continued to be an important figure in the early development of manufacturing in the area. Besides handling the Jewett mills, he served as one of three directors on the first board of the newly incorporated (1815) Jewett City Cotton Manufacturing Company. This company, founded in 1810, was the first cotton mill in the area. Its success led to the founding and development of other mills and the growth of cotton processing as a prime industry of the area.

Wilson, a former captain in the Revolutionary War, served as the only member of the school board in Jewett City after its annexation to neighboring Preston (1786). He also served as selectman in the towns of Norwich, Preston, and Griswold. This occurred because of changes in town lines, not because he changed residence.

Another owner of the house, Alfred A. Young, was also closely associated with the industrial and economic growth of the Jewett City and surrounding area. Young's father purchased the house in 1827. It was later rented as a residence by the junior Young until 1862, when a local clergyman, the Reverend Couch, occupied the house. The Reverend Couch left the Griswold area in 1872, leaving the Wilson house unoccupied.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property .5 acre

Quadrangle name Jewett City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	9	2	5	1	6	2	0	4	6	1	0	1	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A.

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louisa L. Roraback

Edited by John Herzan,
National Register Coordinator

organization National Register Consultant

date June 10, 1985

street & number 39 Freedom Drive

telephone 203-567-0112

city or town Collinsville

state Connecticut

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 July 2, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 8/23/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet John Wilson House Item number 8 Page 1
Jewett City, CT

Significance (continued):

By this time, Alfred A. Young had become an agent of the Slater Mills, the largest mill in the area, and was a trusted associate and adviser to its founder, John F. Slater. He was a founder and incorporator of the Jewett City Savings Bank and served as a director on many local bank and business boards. His business interests extended to Norwich and a mill concern in Rhode Island. His growing importance in the town demanded a larger home on an important site, and Young, who remained the owner of both the Wilson house and property, moved this house downhill a few hundred feet to make way for a larger Queen Anne residence. Although the Wilson house remains on its original property, it was moved so Young's newer house could face Main Street and occupy a more important site in the community.

The newer house was torn down in later years to make way for the present Jewett City Savings Bank building and other commercial development on Main Street. The move probably saved the Wilson house, which is now the only residence that remains standing in Jewett City that is associated with John Wilson and Alfred A. Young. The Wilson House thus remains the surviving structure most importantly associated with two of the area's more influential citizens, both of whom played significant roles in the economic and historical development of Jewett City.

Architectural Significance

Despite alterations made over the years, the Wilson House still retains much of its original character and demonstrates many design elements of the late Georgian style. Its excellent exterior features include the centered pavilion, two-story pilasters and original attic sash. Important interior features include original wide floor boards with original hardware; the original woodwork in the northernmost rooms of the house is also significant. Of special note are the tracks for the shutters of the inside windows of these rooms. One text on early Connecticut architecture describes such shutters as being "occasionally found, though they are by no means common," and later describes them as "rare."¹

Some important exterior and interior features have been changed over the years and these changes keep the house from being presented as an ideal example of its style. These alterations, however, are balanced by the features that remain intact. The remaining details clearly convey the feeling of the period when the house achieved significance.

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Continuation sheet John Wilson House Item number 8 Page 2
Jewett City, CT

Significance (continued):

There are fine examples of this style of architecture throughout Connecticut and it would be incorrect to say the Wilson House is a particularly good example at the state level. It is important to Jewett City, however, and one survey of the southeastern region of Connecticut, which lists as many as twenty-four Colonial homes existing in the Griswold-Jewett City area, mentions the Wilson House as a "very important house in Jewett City."² The house is recognizable as belonging to a distinct period in Connecticut architecture and history.

¹Kelly, J. Frederick. The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut. New York, 1963, p. 143.

²Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. "Opportunities for Historic Preservation: Southeastern Connecticut Region". Norwich, CT, 1977, p. 41.

Item Number 9 (continued):

Burgess, C.F., ed. "Jewett City Souvenir." The Graphic, May, June, July, 1896.

Cathcart, Mrs. Samuel. Interviews. Jewett City, October, November, 1984.

Gray, Robert. Interview. Jewett City, October, 1984.

Jewett, Frederic Clarke, M.D. History and Genealogy of the Jewetts of America, Vol. 1. New York: The Grafton Press, 1908.

Kelly, J. Frederick. The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963.

Miner, Gilbert H., Sr. "Cemeteries with Graves of Honored Dead in Town of Griswold and Vicinity." Griswold, CT: American Legion Post No. 15, 1959.

Phillips, Daniel L. Griswold-A History. Connecticut: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, Co., 1929.

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Continuation sheet John Wilson House Item number 9
 Jewett City, CT

Item Number 9 (continued):

Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. "Opportunities for Historic Preservation: Southeastern Connecticut Region." Norwich, CT: Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, 1977.

Norwich Bulletin. "Ghost's Home Nominated for National Register." Norwich Bulletin, August 10, 1975.

Item Number 10 (continued):

The property nominated commences at a point in the southwest line of Ashland Street where said line intersects the southeasterly line of a lane way adjoining land formerly of the estate of A.A. Young deceased and running from thence southwesterly 118'6" to a bound thence running southeasterly bounding southwesterly on land formerly of the estate of A.A. Young 65' to a bound thence running northeasterly in a line parallel to and 15' distant from a retaining wall and southeasterly face of dwelling house on these described premises to a point on said Ashland Street 54' northwesterly from land of the Ashland Cotton Company from thence running northwesterly by and along southwesterly line of said Ashland Street 65'.

ed for National Register

officially named to the National Register, because of a backlog in the badly understaffed office of Historic Preservation.

When the honor finally comes from Washington, the house and its owner will be eligible for matching restoration grants to preserve its significance. There is

also special treatment given when the area in which the house is located becomes involved in any federally-funded project, such as highways or redevelopment.

And that has proved very comforting to the family, and perhaps even the ghost, who will have things fixed up just to make him (or her) feel a lot more at home.



HISTORIC BUT HAUNTED — John Hoddy of Lewett City stands in front of his Ashland Street home which has been placed in nomination by the state for the National Register of Historic Places. Hoddy and his

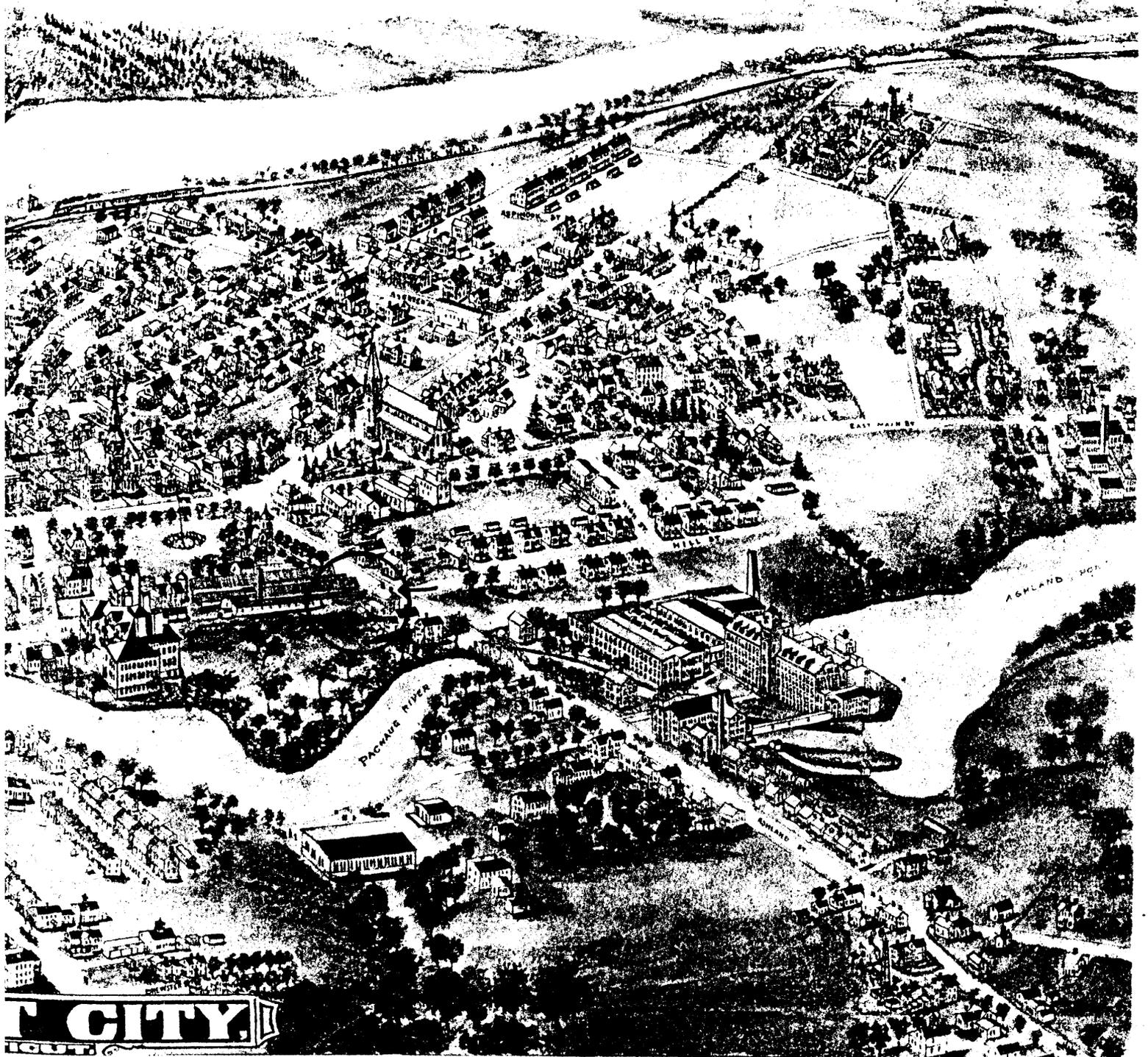
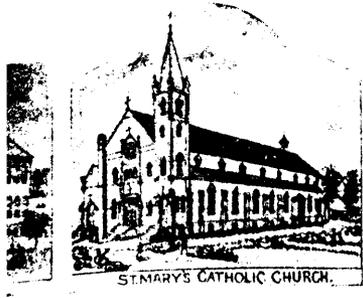
family report some strange goings-on at night, but nobody seems to mind the ghost, which they call "friendly."

(Bulletin Photo by Urbon)

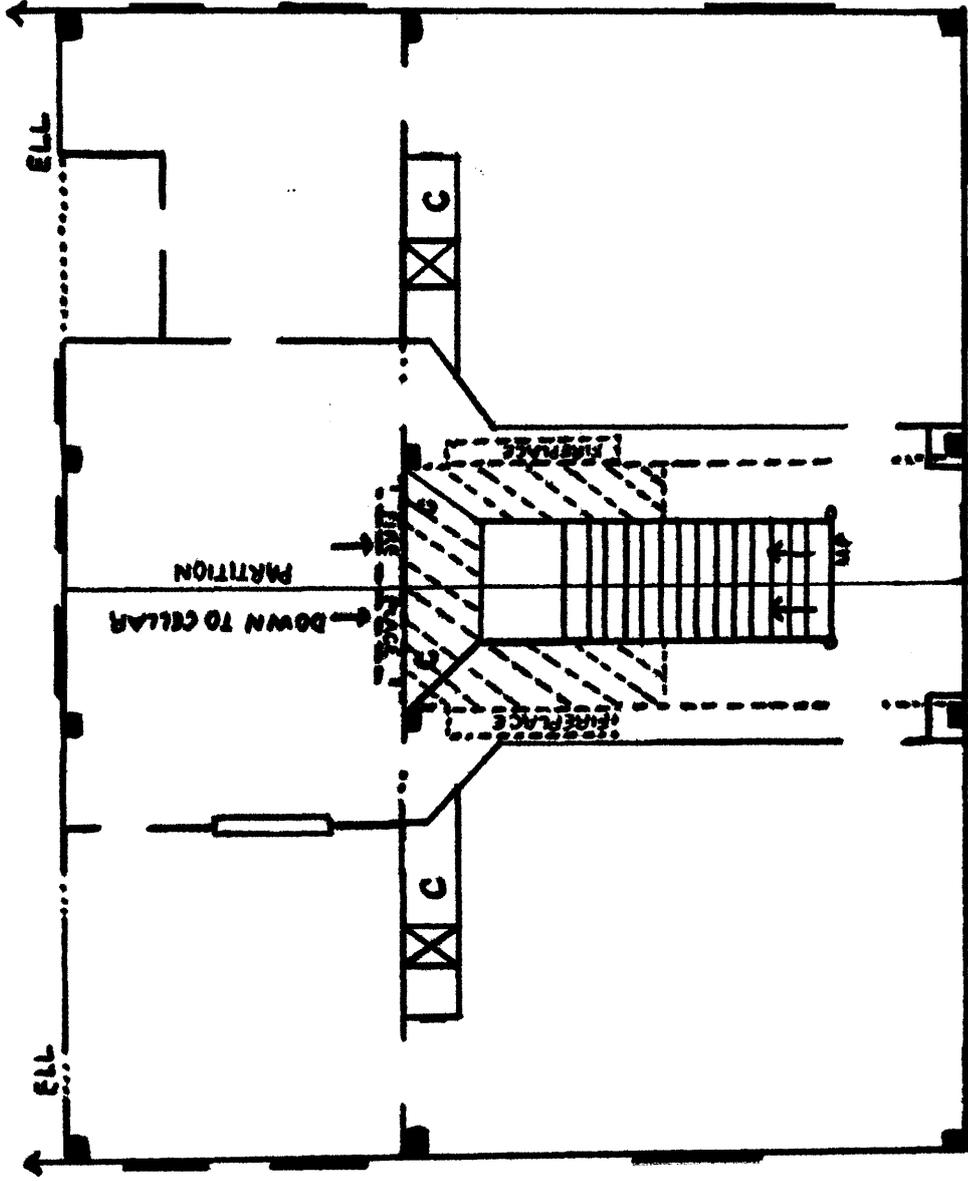
John Wilson House
Jewett City, CT
Steve Urbon, 1975
Norwich Bulletin
NW-Facade Photograph 1

Jewett City, 1923

Arrow indicates location of the Wilson House ←



John Wilson House Map
Jewett City, CT #6
Souvenir Edition
1923
Copy-CT.Historical
Commission



KEY

----- REMOVED C. 1873 - 1885

☒ FLUES C-CLOSET

— OUTSIDE WALLS ORIGINAL; SOME INTERIOR WALLS ORIGINAL, OTHERS ALTERATIONS

FIRST FLOOR PLAN SHOWING SOME ALTERATIONS.

• NOT TO SCALE.

John Wilson House
Jewett City, CT #9
Louisa Roraback
February, 1985
CT Historical Commission
First Floor Plan

John Wilson House Map
Jewett City, CT #7
Beers Map
1868
Copy-CT Historical
Commission

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