

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: 88000708

Date Listed: 06/22/88

Cossitt, Frederick H., Library  
Property Name

Hartford  
County

CT  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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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.

Patrik Andrus  
Signature of the Keeper

6/22/88  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Period of significance: The intended period of significance for the property is 1890-1898, to correspond with the library's date of construction and the last year Godard was actively associated with it. The period 1890-1898 is adequately justified in the statement of significance. The date 1910 was apparently an inadvertant error.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO.

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DISTRIBUTION:

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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MAY 10 1988

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 Cossitt, Frederick H., Library

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 388 North Granby Road

not for publication

city, town Granby

vicinity

state Connecticut

code CT

county Hartford

code 003

zip code 06060

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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]

Signature of certifying official

April 26, 1988

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.

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:)

Patrick Ardus

6/22/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/Library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/Library**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls ShingleWeatherboardroof Asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Cossitt Library, built in 1890 in the Queen Anne style, is a two-story 36' x 24' wood frame building on a 1/4-acre lot on the southeast corner of the intersection of East Street and North Granby Road (see photograph 1). The first story is of brick with one row set at angles for decoration and with bricks forming double arched windows which have stone sills (see photograph 2). The upper story is of wood, some of it clapboard, some of it layered shingles which have rounded lower edges. The shingled siding flares out slightly on the corners at its base above the clapboards. Projecting from the hip roof is a dwarf hip roof forming a clerestory that is sided all around with multiple arched windows. There are cornerboards with molding on this upper projection, and on the front of the upper roof is a gable in which the library's name and date are applied. A photograph taken c. 1900 shows there was once some decorative woodwork projecting from the top of the roof (see photograph 6). The entire exterior, including the shingles and clapboards, the bricks, the trim around the windows, and the decorative woodwork, is painted. The second-story windows are Queen Anne windows with characteristic 3" glass panes around the outside. The front entrance, two sets of double doors with an enclosed porch and an open portico, is at the upper story level, and a staircase descends from it to street level. Originally the staircase descended straight down to the street level, rather than dividing in two as it does now (see photograph 6). The gable over the portico has a fan carved in it and is supported on the corners by fluted columns. The side walls on the enclosed portion of the porch have round windows.

Basically, the original library building of 1890 is intact. There is a one-story shed addition (c. 1965) and a two-story gable addition (1985) on the rear (see photograph 3) to accommodate interior stairs and an office area, and the lower story has been converted from a "hall" to a children's reading room which can be reached now from the new stairs, as well as from the original door on the south end of the building. In the glass transom over the old door can be made out the remnants of the word "HALL." The floor of this lower story is partially below street level, but there are full windows on the front and south side with the original large amber stained-glass panes.

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

FREDERICK H. COSSITT LIBRARY  
GRANBY, CONNECTICUT

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   1  

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The main library and reading room are in the upper story, the center of the room being devoted to the librarian's desk and reading tables, some of which are original. The interior is 17 1/2' high, has a curved plastered ceiling, and is lighted by both fluorescent lights and the clerestory. The clerestory is supported inside by ten wooden columns which have delicate fluting and a molded pediment across the top (see photograph 4). The entrance door is also surrounded with this sort of woodwork and has original decorative brass doorknobs. All the woodwork is the original cypress finished in its natural color. The floor is narrow-board (3 1/2") Southern pine. Some of the bookcases are still in the alcove arrangement of the original design (see photograph 5). In the office area in the gable addition on the rear is the original oak librarian's desk, which matches the tables and chairs in the reading room.

**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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Education

1890-1910

1890

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Godard, George Seymour

Architect/Builder

Architect: Sibley, Jasper Daniel

Builder: Greene, T.J.

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

Criteria

The Frederick H. Cossitt Library in North Granby, Connecticut, is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the building is an unusual and extremely well-preserved example of Queen Anne architecture (Criterion C). Secondly, the first librarian, and the driving force behind the establishment of this library, was George Seymour Godard, well-known Librarian of the State of Connecticut between 1900 and his death in 1936 (Criterion B). Thirdly, the library has played an important cultural role in its community and is a symbol of local philanthropy.

Architecture

The Frederick H. Cossitt Library is important architecturally because it is an unusual and well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style. Nearly all of its original features, including cypress layered shingle siding (from A.T. Stearns Lumber Company of Boston, according to the library account book in the library safe), paired-arch windows on the lower story, decorative brickwork, clerestory projection on the hip roof with its multiple arched windows, fluted columns, interior natural cypress woodwork, stained glass, and alcove book shelves, are intact. Of these, the textured siding, stained glass, hip roof, and lower-story window designs are typical Queen Anne. The symmetry of the building and the form the roof takes with its row of windows are uncommon for this style.

The architect for the Cossitt Library was Jasper Daniel Sibley of Middletown. Sibley was born in New York State in 1833 and learned the trade of carpenter. He later moved to Middletown and established J.D. Sibley & Son, the only architectural firm in Middletown in the 1880s and 1890s. Little is known about his career. George

<sup>1</sup> James Scarborough Sibley, The Sibley Family in America (Honolulu, Hawaii: by the author, 1972), pp.581-2. The Commercial Record Reference Book of the Architects, Engineers, Contractors and Builders of Connecticut, 1897 (New Haven: The Record Publishing Co., 1897), p. 29. The Connecticut Business Directory for 1886 (Boston: Briggs & Co., 1886), p.313. The Middletown and Portland Directory for 1889-90 (New Haven: Price, Lee & Co., 1890), p. 110, 131. The Connecticut Business Directory and Gazetteer for 1896 (Boston: Union Publishing Co., 1896), p. 61.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceFrederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, ConnecticutNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Seymour Godard, who was on the Cossitt Library's first board of directors and who was attending Wesleyan at the time of the library's founding, may have been responsible for locating Sibley.<sup>2</sup>

George Seymour Godard

George Seymour Godard was the first librarian of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library and one of its most active founders and board members. From this, his first library job, he went on in 1900 to become the well-known Librarian of the State of Connecticut. It was in his first librarian's position at the Cossitt Library that he gained experience for the more challenging post he was soon to accept. There he first began to perform the caliber of public service which brought him such popularity and reknown at both the state and national level.

Godard was born in North Granby in 1867 and developed a love for libraries and books at an early age when his father took him to Hartford and introduced him to Charles J. Hoadley, the State Librarian. In 1889, even though he was still working toward his bachelor's degree at Wesleyan University, he was chosen to be on the Cossitt Library's first board of directors and to serve as its first librarian. The early account and accession books, which are currently held in the library safe, show both his diligent labor in filling the library with a wide selection of important literature, and his efforts to expand the cultural environment of North Granby. He consulted librarians and book dealers all over New England; employed "scientific" cataloging techniques he had learned at college; searched around the region for complete sets of periodicals to which he was subscribing (including three professional educators' publications for Granby schoolteachers); had printed a double-entry catalogue so readers could "send for" books from home; kept detailed statistics of numbers of readers, circulation per reader, and types of books most read; and badgered the board of directors and the architect about everything from designing an inviting reading room to building horsesheds (so readers would stay longer in stormy weather).<sup>3</sup>

After Godard received his A.B. from Wesleyan in 1892 and B.D. from Yale in 1895, he accepted an invitation from Charles Hoadley to become Assistant and then Acting State Librarian in 1898. Upon Hoadley's death in 1900, Godard became State Librarian

<sup>2</sup>Algot G. Steinberg, Ancestral Register of George Seymour Godard (Hartford: Ct. State Library, 1935). Carol Laun, "Heritage of Granby: Cossitt Library," The Granby Drummer (Nov. 1982).

<sup>3</sup>The Frederick H. Cossitt Library, Order Book, F.H.Cossitt Library safe, North Granby, Conn. \_\_\_\_\_, Records of the Frederick H. Cossitt Free Library Association, Oct. 8, 1889 - \_\_\_\_\_, Cossitt Library safe. Catalogue of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library, Granby, Conn. (Winsted: The Dowd Printing Co., 1892). "G.S. Godard, Librarian of State, Dies," The Hartford Daily Courant, Feb. 13, 1936.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceFrederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, ConnecticutNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

and found himself doing what no one had yet done for the state: cataloging the books in the library. In the words of Governor Wilbur Cross,

"During this period [1900-1936] he built up a research library of books, records and documents of a variety and character unsurpassed in libraries of this kind. His distinction has been recognized by librarians throughout the country, by membership in numerous historical and patriotic societies, and by honorary degrees in several colleges and universities. He not only supervised the procurement of his collections but examined and studied them, with the result<sup>4</sup> that anyone seeking information was certain to have it without delay."

Godard was responsible for procuring and protecting many of the state's historical treasures (achieving notoriety among professional librarians and legislators he lobbied for funds as "Preservation Godard"); for initiating the practice of making photostat copies with the most up-to-date equipment of documents (especially for people who would then donate the original to the State Library); for initiating the practice of making photostat copies of bills and hearings for members of the legislature; for acquiring the Trumbull Papers (an enormous set of materials on colonial and revolutionary Connecticut) from the Massachusetts Historical Society; for supervising the design of the new State Library Building (1910) "from the bedrock below to the minutest detail beneath its stately roof"; and for generally making the entire library accessible to the people.<sup>5</sup> He "almost<sup>6</sup> solicited demands upon the attention and resourcefulness of the library staff." His work earned him accolades from professionals all over the nation, and presidencies of the National Association of State Librarians and the American Association of Law Libraries, among other national posts. Apparently he was so well known in the state that at public events he was often introduced before the Governor, and when he died he was given a State funeral at which Governors Trumbull and Cross were honorary pall bearers.<sup>7</sup> Today the State Library in Hartford stands as a symbol of George Godard's massive vision, as the Cossitt Library stands as a symbol of his professional beginnings.

<sup>4</sup>As quoted in The Waterbury Republican (February 1, 1936). See also George Seymour Godard, 1865-1936, Memorial Tributes (Cossitt Library Archives). This two-volume collection of letters and newspaper clippings eulogizing Godard is ample evidence of his immense popularity.

<sup>5</sup>Gladys Judd Day, "George Seymour Godard, A Memorial Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Law Librarians," Cambridge, Mass., Aug. 20, 1936, in Memorial Tributes, Vol. II. Hartford Daily Times, February 12, 1936.

<sup>6</sup>Bridgeport Sunday Herald, February 16, 1936.

<sup>7</sup>Steinberg, p. 54. "Godard's Term at State Library Gained Him Wide Recognition," Hartford Daily Courant, February 13, 1936.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Frederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, Connecticut

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

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### Granby's First Public Library

The Frederick H. Cossitt Library also has local significance as an early cultural institution and as a symbol of one of the town's pioneer families, a member of which was the benefactor responsible for the creation of the library.

The philanthropist was Frederick H. Cossitt, a New York City businessman, who had been born across North Granby Road from the present library. North Granby was, in fact, the place of origin of the Cossitt family in the United States. Rene Cossitt, a French immigrant, had settled permanently there in 1742 after a brief stay in Middletown and Simsbury. The family went through three generations in North Granby before beginning to expand across the continent. (Periodically, the Cossitt Family of both the United States and Canada holds reunions at the Cossitt Library.)

At the age of 15, Frederick H. Cossitt, his father just recently dead, traveled to his uncle in Tennessee, where he learned the dry goods business. He became quite successful over the years, and eventually ended up in real estate in New York, where he was said to have lived "one of the busiest and most useful lives in the highest business circles of that city."<sup>8</sup> When he died in 1887, he bequeathed the "Town of North Granby" \$10,000 for a library (also \$75,000 for a library in Memphis, Tennessee where he had learned his business). After legal clarifications, the Town of Granby immediately enacted the necessary legislation to make use of the bequest (contributing one dollar itself) and purchased a lot of land as near as possible to Cossitt's birthplace.

Although there had been private library associations in Granby as early as the 18th century, the Frederick H. Cossitt Library was Granby's first public library. Today Granby also has a more centrally located town library near the town hall, but the Cossitt Library is still maintained by the town as a separate branch with its own staff and programs. In the early days the library's functions included not only providing citizens with reading material, but also operating a community hall in the lower story. This was the site of social gatherings and meetings of various groups, including the Granby Grange. Thus the library served as both a cultural facility and an institution that would invigorate support networks among neighbors in hard times.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hon. William C. Case, Address at the Dedication of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library at North Granby, Conn. March 26, 1891 (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1891), p.4. Pearl Steel Cossitt, The Cossitt Family (Pasadena, Cal.: F.H. Cossitt, 1925), pp.18,41.

<sup>9</sup> Granby, like many rural New England towns in the late 19th century, was caught in a chronic depression. Mark Williams, "Family and Neighbors in Hard Times," Unpubl. Ms., 1980, Salmon Brook Historical Society, Granby, Ct.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Case, Hon. William C. Address at the Dedication of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library at North Granby, Conn. March 26, 1891. Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1891.

The Connecticut Business Directory for 1886. Boston: Briggs & Co., 1886.

The Connecticut Business Directory and Gazetteer for 1896. Boston: Union Publishing Co., 1896.

The Commercial Record Reference Book of the Architects, Engineers, Contractors, and Builders of Connecticut, 1897. New Haven: The Record Publishing Co., 1897.

(continued)

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:

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

Specify repository:  
Salmon Brook Historical Society  
Granby, Ct.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property one quarter acre

UTM References

A 18 | 67 | 9 | 67 | 0 | 46 | 51 | 37 | 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in Vol. 33, p. 437 of the Granby Land Records and is bounded westerly by North Granby Road and Northerly by East Stree and is one quarter acre in area more or less.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This was the plot of land sold by Julius Hayes to the Directors of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library on Feb. 14, 1890, and is the plot of land on which the library sits today.

See continuation sheet

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

name/title Mark Williams, National Register Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 3, 1988

street & number 68 Simsbury Road telephone 203-653-7193

city or town West Granby state Conn. zip code 06090

Frederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, Connecticut

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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Cossitt, Frederick H., Library, "Order Book." Cossitt Library Archives.

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\_\_\_\_\_, Records of the Frederick H. Cossitt Free Library Association, Oct. 8,  
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Cossitt, Pearl Steel. The Cossitt Family. Pasadena, Cal.: F.H.Cossitt, 1925.

"Dedication of the Frederick H. Cossitt Library, Granby, Conn., Thursday, March  
26, 1891." Copy of original printed program, Frederick H. Cossitt Library,  
North Granby, Conn.

"F.H.Cossitt Library." Pamphlet published by Friends of the Cossitt Library, n.d.

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Goddard Enterprises, 1985.

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of the Town of Granby from Oct. 1, 1889 to Oct. 1, 1890. Winsted: The Dowd  
Printing Co., 1890.

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\_\_\_\_\_, Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer, and Board of School  
Visitors of the Town of Granby from Oct. 1, 1890 to Oct. 1, 1891. Winsted:  
The Dowd Printing Co., 1891.

\_\_\_\_\_, Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer, and Board of School  
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\_\_\_\_\_, Annual Reports of the Town of Granby Connecticut, 1923. South  
Manchester, Ct.: The News Print, 1923.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Frederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, Conn.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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McArdle, Alma deC. and Deirdre Bartlett McArdle. Carpenter Gothic: Nineteenth-Century Ornamental Houses of New England. New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978.

The Middletown and Portland Directory for 1889-90. New Haven: Price, Lee & Co., 1890.

Salmon Brook Historical Society, Granby File. See "Libraries - Cossitt."

Sibley, James Scarborough, The Sibley Family in America, 1629-1972. Honolulu, Hawaii: by the author, 1972.

Steinberg, Algot G., Ancestral Register of George Seymour Godard. Hartford: Connecticut State Library Ms., 1935.

Surrogate Court, County of New York, N.Y. "In the Matter of the Judicial Settlement of the Account of Augustus D. Juilliard, Henry Talmadge, Henry R. Talmadge and Edward W. Barnes, Executors of and Trustees under, The Last Will and Testament of Frederick H. Cossitt, Deceased. Copy :Order Directing Service of Citation by Publication, &c with copy of citation," 8 February 1889. Ms. Copy, Frederick H. Cossitt Library, North Granby, Conn.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Frederick H. Cossitt Library  
Granby, Connecticut

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page \_\_\_\_\_

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PHOTOGRAPH KEY  
FREDERICK H. COSSITT LIBRARY  
388 North Granby Rd., N.Granby, Ct.

- Photograph 1: EXTERIOR, FRONT ELEVATION, VIEW WEST  
Mark Williams Photo 4/87  
Negative: Ct. Historical Commission
- Photograph 2: EXTERIOR, LOWER STORY WINDOW AND DECORATIVE  
BRICKWORK, VIEW WEST  
Mark Williams Photo 4/87  
Negative: Ct. Historical Commission
- Photograph 3: VIEW NORTHEAST, RECENT ADDITIONS  
Mark Williams Photo 4/87  
Negative: Ct. Historical Commission
- Photograph 4: INTERIOR, POSTS AND PEDIMENT WITH CLERESTORY  
WINDOWS ABOVE, VIEW SOUTH  
Mark Williams Photo 4/87  
Negative: Ct. Historical Commission
- Photograph 5: INTERIOR, WOODWORK DETAIL AND ALCOVE  
BOOKSHELVES, VIEW SOUTHWEST  
Mark Williams Photo 4/87  
Negative: Ct. Historical Commission
- Photograph 6: EXTERIOR, FRONT ELEVATION, EARLY PHOTOGRAPH  
SHOWING DETAIL ON TOP OF ROOF AND  
ORIGINAL STAIRCASE  
Grace L. Hayes Photo circa 1900  
Negative: Salmon Brook Historical Society  
Granby, Connecticut