

PH0503363

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 29 1977
DATE ENTERED 9 1977

**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 Gay, Ebenezer, House

AND/OR COMMON
Gay-Hoyt House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Sharon

___ VICINITY OF
Sixth

STATE
Connecticut

CODE
09

COUNTY
Hitchfield

CODE
005

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
Sharon Historical Society, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Sharon

___ VICINITY OF
Connecticut

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Sharon Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Sharon

STATE
Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

See Continuation Sheet 1

TITLE
Connecticut Statewide Inventory

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Ebenezer Gay House is located in the village of Sharon on the west side of Main Street. It faces the Town Green and is near the Romanesque Revival town clock at the intersection of Main Street and Route 4. It would be difficult to find a more compatible setting for an historic house since neighboring buildings are of fine architectural quality, are well maintained, and have attractively landscaped yards. Immediately north of the Gay House is the Romanesque Revival stone Hotchkiss Memorial Library building (1893) and across Main Street is the brick Congregational Church (1824), a late Federal period design. In addition to the Gay House, 20 buildings dating from the 18th century and 34 dating from the nineteenth century border Main and Gay Streets and are in a local historic district which will be nominated to the Nat. Register.

The Gay House is approximately 100 feet east of Main Street and faces west. An 1793 deed reveals that the house was part of a 40 acre property with a store and barns. Today the property has been reduced to about two acres and the only outbuildings are a small one-story brick building southeast of the house and an aluminum storage building (c. 1970) near the rear (east) property line. The brick outbuilding which is approximately square in plan and has a pyramidal shaped roof may be contemporary with the main house.

The five-bay, two-story brick house was erected in 1775-1776. It is 42 feet by 32 feet and has a gable roof, now covered with gray asbestos shingles. It has a full cellar. Above the coursed rubble foundations the walls are salmon colored brick. The west (main) and south walls are laid in Flemish bond while the east (rear) and north walls are American bond with one header course to every five courses of stretchers. A non-continuous belt course is located between the first and second stories. Above first-story openings and second-story windows on the ends are jack arches. Windows have 6/6 double-hung sash. Wooden exterior trim is painted white. The wide upper member of the architraves of the first-story windows are embellished with horizontal grooves. The building's cornice forms the upper part of the architraves of second-story front and rear windows. The stacks of the interior end chimneys were probably rebuilt about 1870. A third chimney rises from the rear wall.

The focal point of the main (west) facade is the entrance. The one-bay columnar porch, judging from its light proportions and low-pitch gable roof, was probably added between 1810-20. Federal period porches of this general type are found on houses in Sharon in such quantities that they are known locally as "Sharon stoops." At the Gay House, columns with plain shafts rise from the upper stone step rather than from the stone landing. The porch has an entablature with dentil band, iron side rails, and iron and wood side benches. The main entrance has a six light transom above a wide four-panel door. In the jack arch above the doorway is a stone bearing the date "1775."

A two-story frame ell with gable roof is attached to the center of the rear (east) side of the brick house. This wing with 2/2 window sash was probably added about 1870. Its walls are covered with clapboards, painted white. A one-story frame lean-to addition

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

Gay, Ebenezer, House, Sharon, CT.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Colonial Dames Series: Old Houses of Connecticut
1965 State
Connecticut State Library
Hartford, CT.

Works Projects Administration: Connecticut Survey
1930's State
Connecticut State Library
Hartford, CT.

"Report" Sharon Historic District Study Committee
March 1975 Local
Sharon Historic District Committee
Sharon, CT.

Guide to A Bicentennial Map of the Town of Sharon, CT.
1976 Local
Map Committee of Sharon Heritage '76
Sharon, CT.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Gay, Ebenezer, House Sharon, CT.

7. Description

with shed roof sloping down at the south occupies the south corner between the main block and the ell while a frame one-story lean-to addition with shed roof sloping down at the north occupies the north corner. These small additions have clapboard covered walls which are painted white. They were probably built in the 20th century. The north one has a multipaned bay window which is elliptical in plan. A one-story frame shed has been attached to the rear (east) side of the ell since 1965. It is an older building which was moved to its current location.

The house has a central hall plan with two rooms at each side. Three of the rooms on the first floor have diagonal chimney walls but the southeast room lacks a diagonally set fireplace and apparently never had one since a door occupies part of the space which the fireplace would have occupied. This room apparently was the kitchen and had a kitchen fireplace (now gone) in its east wall. Another house in Sharon, the Perez Gay House (built in 1776-80 and owned by Ebenezer Gay's brother) also has this unusual arrangement.

Interesting interior features of the Ebenezer Gay House include panelled fireplace walls, cupboards, and wide vertical board panelling. The house is unrestored. Later features include an arched opening between the southwest and southeast rooms on the first floor, three inch flooring, and bathrooms. In 1976 the upper story of the ell was remodeled to function as an apartment. George Frederick Poehler was architect for this work.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 1775-76, later additions BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This two-story brick house was the home of Ebenezer Gay (1726-1787), a local politician and Revolutionary War soldier who commanded the Sharon militia. His house, constructed in 1775-76, has a columnar Federal period porch probably added in 1810-20 and several later additions. The gable roofed dwelling with end chimneys has a central hall plan. The fact that the Gay House is open to the public sets it apart from other similar and more elaborate examples of 18th century architecture in Sharon.

Ebenezer Gay was one of the eleven children of John Gay, who settled in Sharon in 1774 soon after the first settlers arrived there in 1739. Ebenezer, a merchant, was active in local affairs, serving as tax-collector and as representative for the town at nine sessions of legislature. Gay married twice. He had four children by his first wife who died in 1764; and seven by his second wife who he married in 1765. Probably due to the expanding size of his family, in 1775-77 he built the large brick house.

Gay was made an ensign in the North Company or Trainband of Sharon in 1763. He played an active military role during the Revolutionary War. By 1783 he was Lieutenant-Colonel of the 14th Regiment of Militia. He commanded the Sharon Militia at the sacking of Danbury and fighting Burgoyne's army. He was one of the three men in the county who purchased supplies for the Continental Army. Very probably he personally subsidized army purchases, for he died insolvent in 1787.

Gay had mortgaged his house to Eleazar Millar of New York City who after taking possession sold it to Austin Warner and Isaac Hunt in 1793. At the time a store and barns were on the property in addition to the brick dwelling. The Hunt family lived in the house until 1874. Isaac Hunt's son Reuben (1804-1874) resided there longer than any other person.

In 1887 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Carter purchased the house. Their daughter, Miss Mary Carter, lived there with a nephew, Philip Partington, until 1936 when she sold the house to Anne Sherman Hoyt. Miss Hoyt bequeathed the house to the Sharon Historical Society in 1951.

During most of its history the building has served as a residence. At one time it functioned as a boarding house. From 1951 to 1965 the Nightingale Shope was located in the house in addition to the Sharon Historical Society. Today the house functions as a local history museum and the upper story of its rear ell contains a caretaker's apartment.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES See Continuation Sheet 3

Leigh French, Jr. Colonial Interiors: The Colonial and Early Federal Periods. 1st series. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1923).
 Caroline B. Hart, compiler, "The Gay-Hoyt House," 1965 (Typewritten), Colonial Dames Series- Old Houses of Connecticut, copies in Ct. State Library, Hartford, Ct., and Gay House, Sharon, Ct.
 H.F. Randolph Mason, Historic Houses of Connecticut Open to the Public 2nd ed. (Essex, Ct.: Faquet Press, 1966), p. 18.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 2

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8	62	6	3	80	46	37	0	30
ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING			

B

ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING			

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

T. Robins Brown Consultant in Architectural History

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

March 1977

STREET & NUMBER

50 South Prospect St.

TELEPHONE

203-566-3075

TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

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

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer and Director,
Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE August 22, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Bill Levovich

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

July 9, 1972

ATTEST:

[Handwritten Signature]

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/5/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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DATE ENTERED	9 878

CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

GAY, Ebenezer, House, Sharon, CT.

8. Significance

The Ebenezer Gay House has local architectural significance as one of the earliest houses in a town center noted for its many distinguished buildings. The house is typical of the transition between the 18th-century central-chimney dwelling and the formal, elaborately-detailed Federal-period house. The Gay House (as well as the very similar Pardee House on Route 41 in Sharon, built several years later) is rather a plain house for a gentleman: the Flemish bond of its brickwork is the only exterior ornament. The interior raised paneling also hearkens back, although the paneling scheme is simpler and the mantelshelf more prominent than the mid-18th-century norm. Yet the Ebenezer Gay House also looks forward: its central hall plan and its brick construction prefigure the formal interiors and stately exteriors characteristic of later homes. Built in 1775, the Gay House is still very early for a brick dwelling: before 1760 there were hardly any brick buildings in the state, and not until after 1800 did they become frequent. By that time, brick houses (such as the one, c.1800, facing the north end of Sharon's green) had become elaborate affairs, often with Palladian windows, quoins, and prominent window lintels. The Ebenezer Gay House is therefore a valuable illustration of the changes in style and construction which occurred in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.