

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 16 1988

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Meigs-Bishop House

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 45 Wall Street N/A not for publication

city, town Madison N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Gulick

street & number 45 Wall Street

city, town Madison N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Madison Town Clerk

street & number 8 School Street

city, town Madison state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Meigs-Bishop House, built c. 1690, is a five-bay, two-story framed gable-roof residence with a center chimney (Photograph 1). Originally of one-room plan, the c. 1690 house was converted to two-room plan with the addition of the north front room and the chamber above it (Figure 1). The configuration has been further altered by a lean-to addition (added c. 1725) and two smaller ells built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Photograph 3 and Figure 1). Surrounded by commercial and residential properties, the house is located on the west side of Wall Street at the beginning of a small lane called Brookside Road in Madison.

The facade (eastern elevation) of the house contains a plain cased entry with a six-light transom and simple crown mold above. This entry, along with the four-panel front door, may be original. Sash on the first floor of the facade are 12-over-12; sash on the second floor are 12-over-8. Plain wood frames all sash; those on the first floor are topped with a simple crown. These double-hung sash are presumed to have replaced the original casement windows and were added to the house after the lean-to addition. The two 12-over-12 sash at the southern end of the facade appear as 6-over-6 sash in a 1915 photograph and are later replacements. Second-floor sash almost abut the cornice, which is shallow and boxed but otherwise unadorned. The fieldstone foundation is original; the siding was redone in the late 1960s. A chimney, built of stone up to the attic level and topped out with brick, rises from behind the wood-shingled roof ridge. The original brick was repointed c. 1977.

The northern elevation (Photograph 2) contains a rectangular attic light and a six-light window to the west on the second floor. Single 12-over-12 sash and 12-over-8 sash mark the first and second floors, respectively. The rake is very shallow and simply molded. This elevation also contains a hip-roofed ell toward the west along the lean-to addition (Photographs 2 and 3); part of this ell appears in a photograph dated April, 1889. The 12-over-12 sash and eight-light windows of the ell, along with the multi-light door at the north, are late 19th and 20th century additions.

The western elevation (Photograph 3) contains the lean-to addition. Here, the lean-to roof has been extended to cover the c. 1889 ell. Sash along the rear (western elevation) of the house are a mixture of 8-over-12 and 6-over-6, with two eight-light windows near the roofline. Also visible at this elevation are two skylights which lie flush against the roof. A one-story hip-roofed ell extends from the south of this elevation (Photograph 3); a brick flue for the heating system rises along the western wall of the ell. An unusual feature, located in the northern wall of the ell, is an old "Dutch" door. The door contains original hardware and appears to be as old as the original house. The ell was renovated in 1977.

The southern elevation (Photograph 1) contains a mixture of 8-over-12, 12-over-12, and 6-over-6 sash with the same style attic light found on the northern elevation. The window frames are 18th-century additions; the windows are 19th-century additions.

The first floor (Figure 1) includes the largely intact, original porch which contains wide floorboards and feather-edged sheathing on the walls. A flight of closed string stairs, of two-run type, is enclosed with horizontally jointed plain sheathing on one side and the chimney stack on the other. Neither balusters nor a handrail are present. A batten door separates the porch from the stairway; another door opens from the porch to the cellar. Neither door is original to the c. 1690 house. Original cut stone stairs descend under the main stairway to the cellar below.

Both the north and south front rooms contain original wide floorboards, exposed posts, beams, joists, and stone fireplaces. The mantel treatments in both rooms were added after the c. 1690 house was built.

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Historic American Buildings Survey
1972

Federal

Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Historic Resources Inventory, Madison Survey
1979

Local

Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, Connecticut

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The south front room features an exposed summer beam with chamfers ending in lamb's tongue grooves. Original feather-edged sheathing covers the fireplace wall. A small rectangular cupboard, built into the chimney at the west end of the mantel, is also original.

The north front room and the chamber above it are not original to the c. 1690 house (Figure 1). Both rooms were probably added to the c. 1690 house sometime before or at about the same time as the lean-to addition. While these rooms retain original early 18th-century features, they lack the large, exposed summer beams found in the south-facing rooms. This fact suggests that the two rooms were added after the initial construction of the c. 1690 house.

The north front room contains unusual exposed hand-hewn joists; such joists, when left exposed, are commonly planed smooth. Vertical sheathing covers the east end of the fireplace wall (Photograph 4). The remainder of the wall is exposed chimney stone; this is not an original feature. The fireplace is framed by a pair of pilasters, rising from plain pedestals, whose molded caps support an unadorned frieze. This in turn is the base for the plain wood mantel.

Window surrounds in both front rooms are simply molded with wide stools and molded aprons; below are window-width panels placed above a plain baseboard. These details, along with the mantel treatment in the north front room, are 18th-century additions.

The large lean-to addition to the west (Figure 1 and Photograph 5) contains a combination of original plaster and plain wood sheathing on the walls as well as original floors. The fireplace (east) wall of the largest room of the lean-to addition (Photograph 5) is covered with feather-edged sheathing, except above the mantel where coursed brick and chimney stone are used (a later feature). A wood lintel and simple molded wood mantel span the top of the fireplace opening. A cabinet door, to the north of the fireplace and under the lintel, opens onto a beehive oven; a small oven sits on top of a larger ash pit. In houses of this date the bake oven is usually located above a recessed chamber, which is built into the chimney stack. The cabinet door is probably an early 19th-century addition; all the other features are original to the lean-to addition.

The small hip-roofed ell (Photograph 3 and Figure 1), built c. 1889, contains a four-panel door original to the lean-to addition, and the "Dutch" door, which was probably moved to the ell from another part of the house.

The upstairs part of the house has been altered but many original features remain intact.

The second floor landing, which retains its original sheathing and wide floorboards, features beams and flared posts that are cased with plain wood. The attic stairs, which are exposed above those leading to the second floor, rise from a c. 1690 door with original hardware. The exposed attic floorboards make up the ceiling above the second floor landing.

A large original board and batten door with long strap hinges opens into the south chamber. This room contains horizontal wainscot along the lower half of the outer walls. The fireplace wall is covered with a combination of original vertical sheathing and exposed brick and chimney stone, the latter a later addition. Most posts, beams, and girts are simply cased; the chamfered summer beam, joists, and attic floorboards are exposed.

An original two-panel door leads from the second-floor porch to the north chamber. This room contains an original (to the c. 1725 addition) fireplace surrounded by a bolection molding. Other details, added after the lean-to addition was built, include a plain wood mantel and three raised panels, located above the fireplace. A chair rail encircles the room; posts and beams are simply cased. The exposed ceiling joists are original.

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Original floorboards and some original sheathing and doors, relocated from other parts of the house, are found in the lean-to attic. Part of the east wall of the lean-to attic contains some sheathing; the remainder of the wall is exposed chimney stone, not an original feature.

Two shed outbuildings, built in the late 20th-century, are located to the southwest of the main house (Photograph 6). One building was moved from the center of the backyard (the west part of the property) to its present location. Framed with wood, they are covered with vertical board siding and have gable roofs. Neither building contributes to the significance of the site.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1690 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Meigs-Bishop House is architecturally significant as the second oldest house in Madison. It retains many original features from its c. 1690 construction date. Many of the changes made over the years display the architectural development of both the plan and style of an early Connecticut home (Criterion C). The Meigs-Bishop House is also notable for its historic associations with Captain Janna Meigs, an important public figure in colonial Madison, and Captain Phineas Meigs, a local Revolutionary War hero. The house is the surviving residence most closely associated with both these men.

Architectural Significance

The Meigs-Bishop House is architecturally important to Madison and Connecticut as a good example of a late 17th-century home. Although there are older homes in the state, the Meigs-Bishop House is the second oldest house in Madison.¹ It retains enough of its original detail and design to make it recognizable as a one-room plan house, an early building plan used in the state. The wood sheathing on the walls, the exposed structural members, the wide floorboards, the cut-stone cellar stairs, the doors with original hardware, and the large stone chimney are all some of the features that mark this as an early colonial residence.

Many of the alterations made after the c. 1690 building date are the result of the development in design and style of colonial buildings in Connecticut and do not detract from the significance of the property. The additions of the north parlor, north parlor chamber and lean-to were common alterations to one-room plan 17th-century residences. The casing of the upstairs structural members of the house and the paneling in the parlor and parlor chamber were common 18th-century features.

Historical Background

Janna Meigs was born in 1672, the son of Deacon John Meigs, both early settlers of East Guilford (now Madison). Janna Meigs built the present house c. 1690 after receiving the land from his father. While living in the house, Janna Meigs became the first magistrate of East Guilford. He also represented the district in the legislature of the Colony of Connecticut from 1716–1718 and again in 1726. He distinguished himself locally as a justice of the peace for the New Haven Colony (1722–1733) and as a deacon of the Congregational Church. Janna Meigs deeded the house to his son, Lieutenant Janna Meigs, who in turn deeded the house to his first cousin, Captain Phineas Meigs.

Phineas Meigs first served in the Revolutionary Army, from 1777 to 1780, as a private in the Sixth Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel William Douglass and later under Captain Samuel Barker. He also served under Captain Nathaniel Edwards in General Waterbury's State Brigade. After retiring from the Army, Meigs was named captain of the Guilford militia. Forty men from Guilford and Madison were under Meigs' command.

¹Historic Resources Inventory, Madison Survey. 1979.

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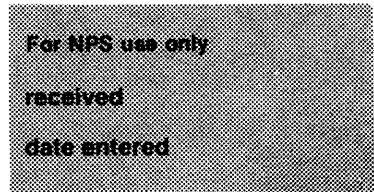
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Captain Phineas Meigs was engaged in one of Connecticut's last military actions in the Revolutionary War. Early on May 19, 1782, town sentinels alerted the town to the approach of three British frigates. A battle ensued when the British boats tried to capture an American frigate. Meigs led his men to the shore from his Wall Street home (the present Meigs Bishop House). A fight took place on shore and Meigs was shot through the head (the hat is on display at the Connecticut Historical Society). Meigs was the last New Englander to be killed in an action against the British in the Revolutionary War.

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Item Number 9 (continued):

Meigs, Henry B. Record of the Descendants of Vincent Meigs. Baltimore, MD:
John S. Bridges & Co., 1901.

Platt, Phillip S. Madison's Heritage. New Haven, CT: The Walker-Rackliff Co.,
Inc., 1964.

Ryerson, Kathleen Hulser. A Brief History of Madison Connecticut. New York, New York:
Pageant Press, Inc., 1960.

Sprague, Margaret. Guilford Shoreline Times, April 26, 1977.

Steiner, Bernard Christian. History of Guilford and Madison, Connecticut. Baltimore,
MD: The Friedenmald Co., 1897.

Talcott, Alvan. Families of Early Guilford, CT. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical
Publishing Co., Inc., 1984.

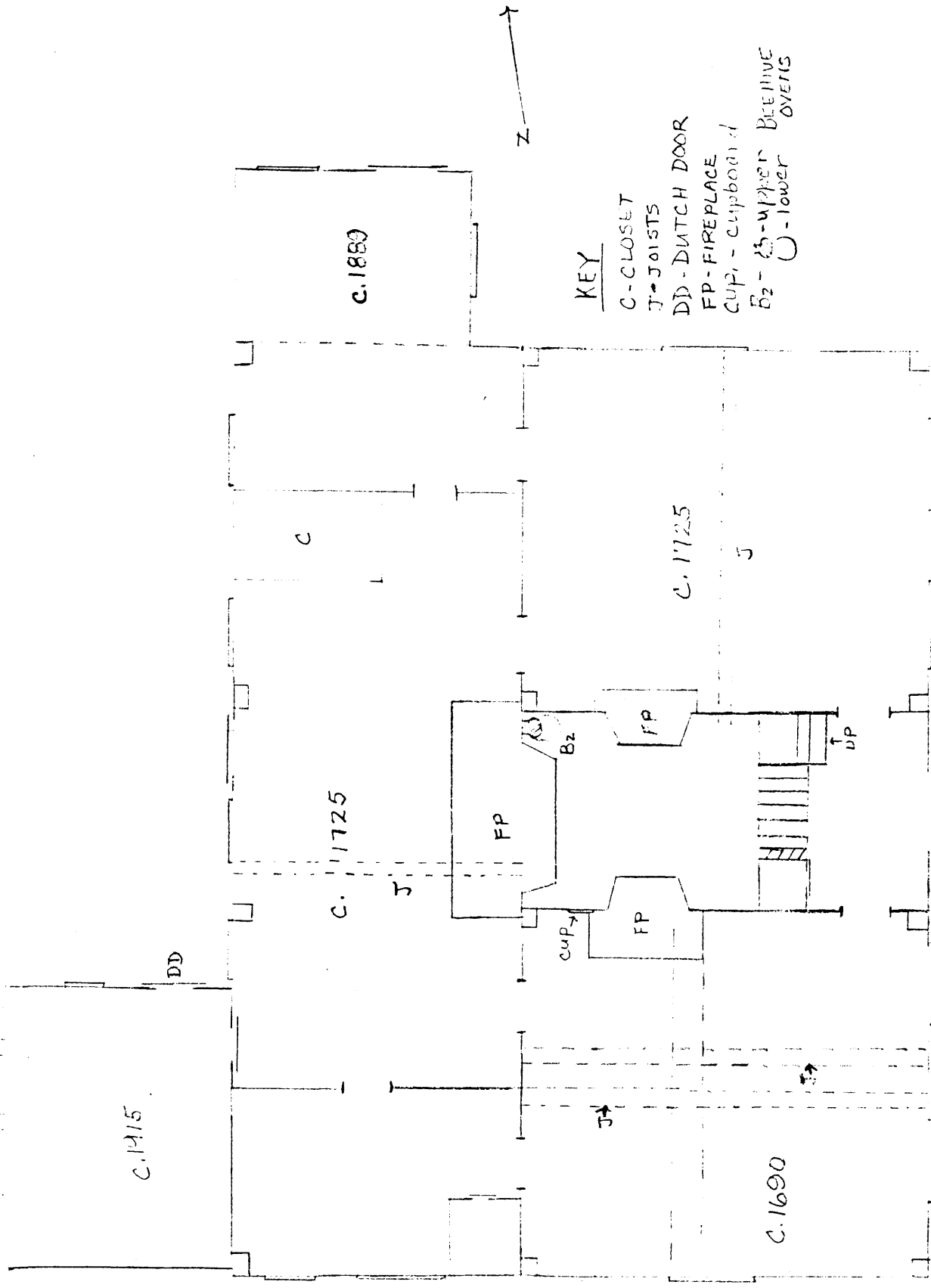
Watrous, Louise E.D. Madison 1645-1938. Madison Historical Society.

Wilcox, W. J. "Madison, Connecticut." The Young Men's Club of Madison, 1915.

1.----- "Battle for Madison." Guilford Shoreline Times, April 15, 1982.

2.----- "Proceedings at the Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Settlement
of Guilford, CT." New Haven, CT: Stafford Printing, 1889.

1. and 2. No author.



KEY
 C - CLOSET
 J - JOISTS
 DD - DUTCH DOOR
 FP - FIREPLACE
 cup - cupboard
 B₂ - Beehive Oven
 O - lower
 O - upper

MEIGS-BISHOP HOUSE (FIRST FLOOR)
 C. 1690
 PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

Meigs-Bishop House

Madison, CT

Louisa Roraback

August, 1986

CT Historical Commission

Hartford, CT

Figure 1 Floor Plan- First

Floor