

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

58000000

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RECEIVED AUG 6 1979	
DATE ENTERED	OCT 4 1979

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

Luther Palmer House

AND/OR COMMON

Pauchunganuc Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 49

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

North Stonington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Connecticut

0505

VICINITY OF

2nd-

Christopher Dodd

CODE

COUNTY

New London

011

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED (ell only)

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

Robert Palmer

STREET & NUMBER

RFD 1, Box 260

CITY, TOWN

North Stonington

VICINITY OF

CT

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

North Stonington

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

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

Pauchunganuc Farm is a well-maintained, 19th-century farm complex with a 2-story, center-chimney, Federal style farmhouse, an 1883 gambrel-roofed, Shingle Style barn, a 19th-century corn crib and a 1901 outhouse. Set up on a terraced lawn behind a granite retaining wall, the gable-roofed, clapboarded farmhouse survives with a full complement of 19th-century furnishings original to the house, while the barn, to the rear, is filled with a complete range of 19th-century farming implements. The farm faces west at the summit of Pendleton Hill amid open farmland overgrown with scrub, one of many inactive 19th-century farms in North Stonington. Pauchunganuc Farm, the buildings and the land they stand on, has remained in the Palmer family since 1711.

The Federal style farmhouse, built between 1807 and 1822 by Luther Palmer, grandson of the original landholder, Gershom Palmer, follows the conventional center-chimney floorplan, a formula which remained current, particularly in rural areas, well into the 19th century. In its embellishment, though, the farmhouse is a skillful, and locally, rare, rural expression of the Federal style. The Federal style is clearly stated on the facade of the house, in its detailing and fenestration. A columned front porch is the facade's dominating decorative feature. The gabled porch roof, with fretwork molding and a vaulted soffit, is supported by two, odd columns with wildly exaggerated entasis. Reminiscent of the widely flared columns sometimes found in early 20th-century Colonial Revival houses, the columns are, in fact, original and the owners have the receipt for their purchase. The door, topped with a standard, 5-light transom, is flanked by fluted pilasters.

Decorative detail is not confined to the porch but is subtly expressed in several other elements of the facade. Fenestration adds visual variety to a conventional 9-window facade, with rectangular, 12-over-12 sash windows on the first floor and shorter, squarer, 8-over-12 sash on the second floor. At the cornice, the typical cyma molding is replaced with a band of delicate fretwork. Above that, the chimney is fancifully treated with chimney caps in an inverted heart shape. The lawn, terraced up to the entrance, enhances the house's prominence, at the top of a knoll. Even the siding, narrow clapboards at the sill, increasing in width up the wall, and the underpinning, neatly-laid granite blocks set off with a stone apron, contribute to the sense of refinement created by the thoughtful use of surface detail which is so characteristic of the Federal style.

The graduated fenestration of the facade is continued on the north and south walls. In the attic, though, the sash are mismatched: on the north wall is a single window with the same 8-over 12 sash as is found on the second floor, but at the south end, there are two windows, both with 6-over-9 sash. Perhaps these came from the 18th-century ell, as such an uneven configuration of panes is held to be a mark of

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early work.

The roof is framed with hewn rafters and sawn collar beams. The granite underpinning and fieldstone apron mentioned above are incorporated in a cellar foundation of ramdon rubble. Rough posts support the joists and the chimney foundation includes several massive load-bearing timbers. There is a heap of fieldstones piled along the cellar south wall; their original purpose unknown, they may be the foundation for some earlier house, begun and then abandoned.

Given the unusually decorative exterior detail, it is surprising that the interior of the farmhouse is as plainly finished as it is. In fact, the only outstanding aspect of the interior is its precision. The well-established floorplan occasioned by a central-chimney is employed with almost scientific exactitude; this is particularly evident in the wall dividing the back of the house from the front. The openings from the kitchen to the parlor and hall, respectively, are equidistant, as are the doors from the hall and parlor to their subordinate rooms. The neat arrangement of paneling and doors along that wall forms a mirror image from one side to the other. (See Floor Plan.) Such precision would have been impossible at any earlier date than the 19th century.

Elsewhere the interior woodwork is plain. In the entry, the balusters of the three-quarter turn staircase are square posts, angled diagonally; there is a simple scroll bracket beneath the treads. The parlor mantel is a simple fluted frieze; the mantels throughout the house are simpler moldings. The posts in all the rooms are cased; in most of the rooms, there is a chair rail. Some decorative detail is found on the floors of the entry and parlor; both are smoked, painted to resemble marble.

Though the interior is architecturally undistinguished, it is remarkable for the fact that each room is completely furnished with its original contents. A wealth of family furnishings and objects, down to the minutest accoutrement, survive and are preserved in good condition. Some of the furnishings date from the 18th century, but most are 19th-century objects purchased for use in that house. Further, receipts and account books recording the purchases, from furniture and china to Mrs. Palmer's best leghorn bonnet (still in its fancifully papered hatbox) are still owned by the family and remain in the house. Other purchases, still in the store's wrapping paper, have been found by the present owners. The farmhouse is unoccupied and is maintained almost as a museum exhibit by the owners.

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To the rear of the Federal farmhouse is a long ell composed of several sections dating from various periods. Directly behind the farmhouse stand a 1½-story, end-chimney, clapboarded section, which was, as a free-standing house, the first farmhouse on the property. A number of elements characterize the ell as an 18th-century building. Four 12-over-12 sash windows survive along the south wall, while, in the kitchen (northeast), is a stone fireplace with its iron trammel still in place. There are widely flared posts in the corners and in the cheeseroom (southwest), a hewn, chamfered beam is exposed. In the mid-19th-century, the chimney was rebuilt above the roof, and a box staircase was removed from the northwest corner room, but the remaining evidence corroborates that the ell was built in the 18th century. The owner stated that a consultant hired to appraise the house and its contents, gave 1720 as the earliest possible date for the ell's construction.¹

The remainder of the long ell was once a barn and carriage shed but was enclosed in 1901 to provide rooms for a hired man. It is 1½-stories with clapboard siding and a small porch on the south wall. Two small bedrooms, a living room, dining room, and kitchen comprise that portion of the house. There is little of note there but in the bathroom (which was partitioned off from the adjoining milkroom), there is some featheredge paneling, taken from the kitchen of the 18th-century ell. One of the owners, a Palmer descendant, now lives in the 1901 section, while the 18th-century ell is rented.

To the rear of the house stands a large, Shingle Style, gambrel-roofed barn, built in 1883, and designed by a cousin of the Palmers, Edward York. York, a Stonington resident and an architect, worked in the offices of McKim, Mead, and White.² The barn, originally open but now divided with two haymows, is full of 19th-century farming implements, including large pieces of equipment, such as plows and harrows, as well as numerous smaller items, harness, carpentry tools, etc., and several cast-iron stoves.

1. John Curtis, Director, Curatorial Services, Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts.
2. Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathbun, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles, Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970. Edward Palmer York (1865-1928) worked from 1889-1897 in the office of McKim, Mead, and White, later working in partnership with Philip Sawyer. Primarily known as a designer of large office buildings, banks, hospitals.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Family History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Criteria: B,C

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pauchunganuc Farm, located along Route 49 in North Stonington, Connecticut is a 19th-century farm complex. The farmhouse, built early in the 19th century, is of architectural significance as an exponent of the Federal style, locally unrivalled, and possessing a refinement rare in a rural structure. The large, gambrel-roofed barn to the rear, built in 1883, is a good example of the application of a domestic style, the Shingle Style, to a non-residential structure. (Criteria C) Further, both the barn and house are important in the history of the Palmer family as they contain a complete array of family papers, furnishings and objects. The contents of the house and barn also provide a wealth of information for the archeological historian, as they remain intact and undispersed from their original site, and as they are documented by receipts and accounts, remaining in the house. Historically, the house is significant for its association with the Palmer family, influential in the region since the early days of its settlement. (Criteria B)

Though structurally, the farmhouse is a conventional center-chimney house, several subtle decorative details clearly distinguish this house from its many contemporaries built on the same, simple formula. Among those distinguishing details are the use of varied fenestration, where the windows on the first floor are larger than those on the second, and the use of lighter, more delicate moldings, such as the fretwork cornice molding crossing the facade of the house. Graduated clapboarding is perhaps the subtlest technique employed; it gives a sense of movement to the facade and seems to raise the house farther up on its elevated site. The columned front porch, though Georgian in derivation, is a strong decorative focal point, tying into the Federal style. As a whole, the house illustrates, in its structure, the conservatism of outlying, rural areas (where 18th-century houseplans persisted through to the Greek Revival), while, at the same time, in its embellishment, it is a most stylish and innovative structure for North Stonington.

The shingled barn behind the house shows that a mundane and functional structure need not be plain or unattractive. With its bright, contrasting trim, cupola, "Palladian" ventilator and angled gable window, the barn is an appealing structure. The 18th-century ell back of the Federal farmhouse illustrates a common pattern, that in which a rear ell

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interviews-Anna Palmer North Coit, Jean Palmer North, December 1978
 Mrs. Coit has completed a detailed chain of title, with aerial maps of the farm with transfers of the property outlined on the maps, as well as volume and page references to pertinent deeds. She retains family papers recording payments and transfers of portions of the property

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA and, considering her familiarity and careful research of the property, I relied on the information she presented to write the nomination

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Voluntown and Ashaway Quads QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	26,29,7,0	4,59,8,81,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Volume 11, page 397, North Stonington Land Records

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

Sarah Zimmerman, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

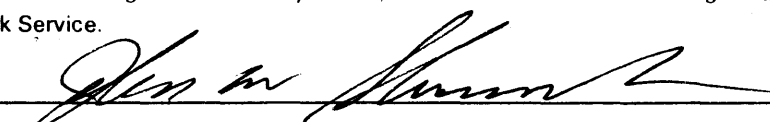
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

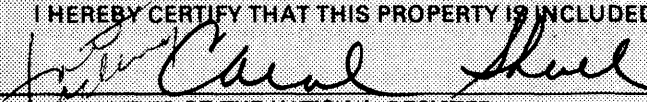


TITLE **Director, Connecticut Historical Commission**

DATE **July 27, 1979**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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



KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE **10-4-79**

ATTEST: 
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE **10-4-79**

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is an older house. With the carriage shed ell, enclosed in 1901, the ells reflect the evolutionary sequence of Pauchunganuc Farm, with buildings from the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries.

The land on which the buildings stand is a portion of a much larger tract first acquired by Gershom Palmer in 1711 from the Pequot Indians (who had their reservation at North Stonington). Known as "ye purchase of Cattapesett," the land was divided among Gershom's four sons, a quarter descending to Luther Palmer, Gershom's grandson. Of Gershom's four sons' farms, only Pauchunganuc still stands, though much of the original quarter of land is dispersed and the farm has not been actively farmed for some years now.

Luther Palmer, builder of the Federal farmhouse, was a prominent man in North Stonington, and especially on Pendleton Hill, at whose summit Pauchunganuc sits. For many years, he was the Pendleton Hill Postmaster, with the southwest corner room of the 18th-century ell serving as the Pendleton Hill Post Office. In 1830, he and his brother, Abel, deeded some of their land to the First Baptist Church, which stands just south of Pauchunganuc on the opposite side of Pendleton Hill Road. The Federal style church was an early and important congregation at a time when the Baptists were not well established in Connecticut. The whole Palmer family history feeds into the history of the entire Stonington area; Luther Palmer's great-grandfather, Walter, was one of Stonington's original settlers. Palmer descendants later figured in Stonington's maritime development as sailors, sea-captains, and whalers; in 1820, Captain Nathaniel Palmer discovered "Palmerland," an Antarctic peninsula, thereby earning a secure niche in Stonington's maritime annals. Through intermarriage, they are related to the Stantons, Denisons, and others of Stonington's founding families. Pauchunganuc Farm is a most complete and well-preserved grouping associated with a family of considerable local significance.

To the historian or antiquary, Pauchunganuc Farm provides a remarkable record of 19th-century farm life. Until the 1960s, Luther Palmer's granddaughters occupied the house, continuing to live very much in a 19th-century manner, with few modern conveniences. This insured the survival of the contents intact. Though there are a number of fine pieces of furniture and china, and, in the barn, some rare early tools, the significance of the Pauchunganuc collection derives from its

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(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Pauchunganuc Farm

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range, from the prosaic to the refined, and its totality, so that one senses, almost eerily, that the 19th-century occupants have merely stepped out and will presently return to resume their daily routine. As such, Pauchunganuc Farm is an extremely well-preserved document, a reflection of 19th-century farm life.

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Luther Palmer House
(Pauchunganuc Farm)
North Stonington, CT

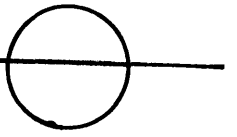
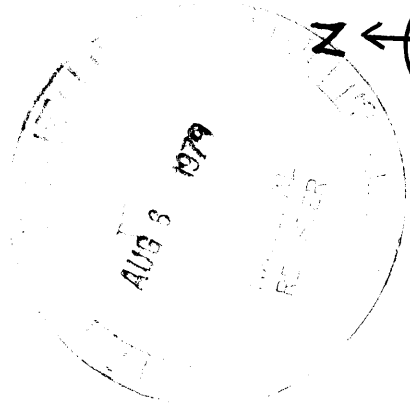
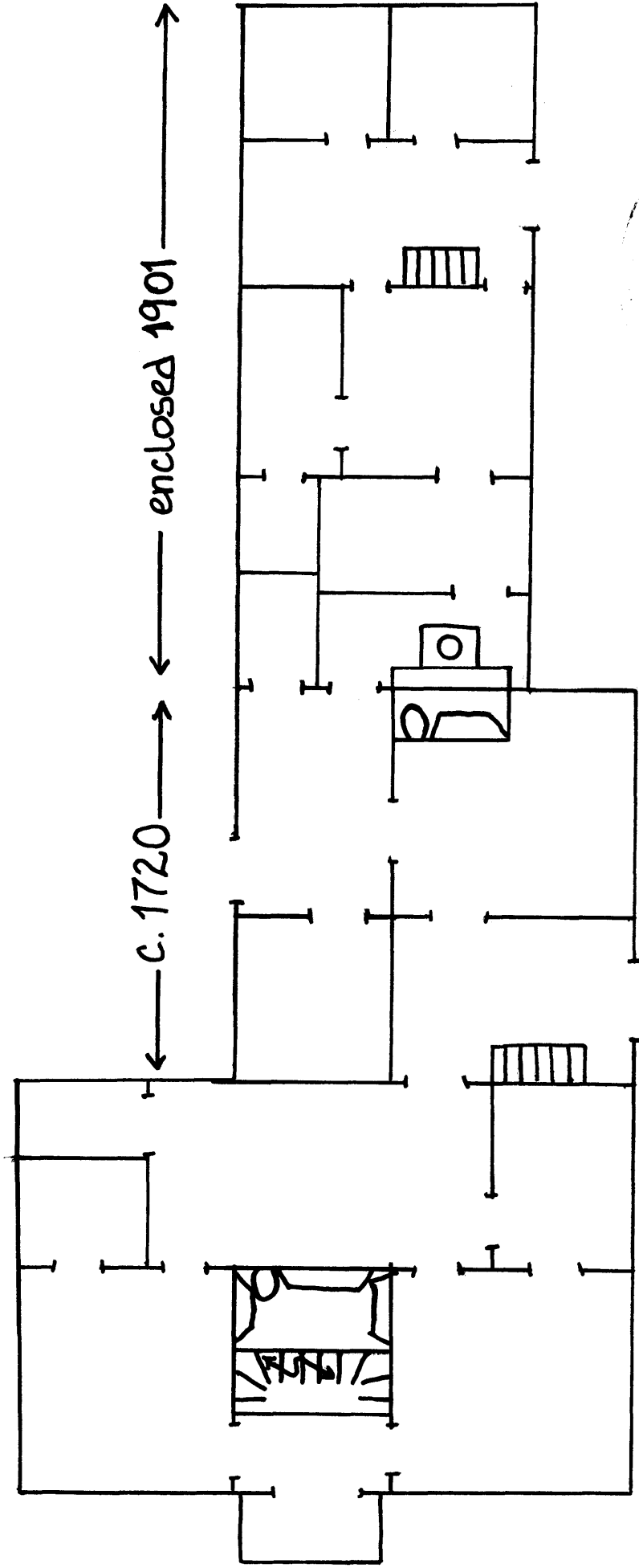
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Boundary Justification:

Only the Luther Palmer house and barn and the land immediately surrounding these structures are included in the nomination. The original configurations of the quarter of land descending to Luther from Gershom Palmer have been altered and re-altered over the years. Hence the acreage of the property as it now exists has little relationship to the original acreage and agricultural land use of Pauchunganuc Farm. The farm has been inactive since the early 20th century.

between 1807 - 1822



PAUCHUNGANUC FARM
NORTH STONINGTON, CT
NOT TO SCALE
1st FLOOR PLAN