

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

For HCRS use only

received MAY 30 1984
date entered OCT 26 1984

1. Name

historic John Whittlesey, Jr., House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 40 Ferry Road,

N/A not for publication

city, town Old Saybrook

N/A vicinity of

congressional district 2nd

state Connecticut

code 09

county Middlesex

code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" 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 Estate of Cleo M. Millerbaugh c/o H. Judson Carr

street & number 20 Main Street

city, town Essex

N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk, Town Hall

street & number 302 Main Street

city, town Old Saybrook

state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford

state Connecticut

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 date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Whittlesey, Jr. house is a frame dwelling located on Ferry Road in Old Saybrook. The house is on a three acre lot on the south side of Ferry Road, and faces the road to the north. A stone retaining wall separates the lot from the road. A stone fence and a slight depression in the lot mark the original line of Ferry Road. (Photograph 1). The Whittlesey house is 2½-stories in height, resting on a stone rubble foundation. It is sided with clapboard and has a gable roof through which a central chimney protrudes. The front section was built about 1750. In the rear is an ell built in 1693 (Photograph 2), also of 2½-stories. A 2-story modern addition at the southeast corner has a shed roof. Projecting beyond the east side of the house is a 1-story, gable-roofed kitchen of recent date. (Photograph 3). A modern garage and barn are to the southeast and southwest of the house. (Photograph 2). Directly to the south is a stone-lined well.

The facade of the Whittlesey house is five bays in width. First floor windows have 12-over-12 double-hung sash. Second floor windows are provided with 12-over-8 double-hung sash. Window frames and sash throughout the house were replaced in 1955 by John Millerbaugh, the owner. The original sash had been replaced in the early 19th-century with 6-over-6 double-hung sash. (Photograph 1). The front door is in the center of the facade. (Photograph 4). The doors are double, with two panels each. These were salvaged from a Norwich home, and installed in 1955. A batten storm door of recent construction protects the double doors. The door surround preserves its original outline, although the molding attached to it is recent.

The side elevations of the house have one window in each story. The first and second floor windows have the same sash as their counterparts in the facade. The attic window has 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The rear of the main body of the house has windows with 8-over-8 double-hung sash.

The ell has 8-over-8 double-hung sash on the first and second floors. The attic window contains 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The irregular placement of the windows and the early date of the ell indicate the possibility that the original windows had casement sash. A door at the south end of the ell was replaced in 1955. The original was constructed of featheredge panelling and had a wooden latch and lock of ingenious design. The east side of the ell was altered in 1955 to accomodate a modern addition where the ell and main house meet. This addition replaced an earlier addition of 18th-century date. It is not readily visible from the road and is consistent with the rest of the exterior. (Photograph 3).

The interior of the house retains the original floor plan. The front of the house, dating to about 1750, is divided into two rooms on each floor by the center chimney. A passageway entered from the front door gives access to both the sitting room and parlor on either side. A staircase connects the first floor passage with the second floor passage, which fulfills the same function. The staircase is original and consists of a plain square newel post, a molded handrail, and square balusters.

First floor doors are double-panelled. Hinges and straps are of wrought iron. The inner walls of both the sitting room and parlor on the first floor are fully panelled. Fireplaces have bolection moldings surrounding them. (Photo-

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The first floor sitting room has a panelled dado with chair rail on three walls, with plaster above, and a cupboard built into the southeast corner. (Photograph 6). The cupboard was rebuilt by Mr. Millerbaugh in 1955. The parlor has a chair rail set into plastered walls. Posts, girds, and summer beams are exposed, although encased in beaded casings.

Second floor doors have four panels each. The sitting room chamber has one fully panelled wall surrounding the fireplace. Both fireplaces have bolection moldings. The remainder of the second floor is plastered throughout. Posts and girds are treated as on the first floor. Summer beams are absent.

The ell in the rear of the house contains one room on each floor. A large fireplace with separate ovens is built into the center chimney on the first floor. White pine sheathing with shadow molding surrounds this. (Photograph 7). Heavy post and beam construction is left exposed except for cased girds on the east and west of the first floor. (Photograph 8). A large summer beam supports exposed joists on the first floor, and is mortised and tenoned into end girds to north and south. Walls are panelled with pine sheathing decorated by shadow molding. Much of this material was replaced in 1955. The south wall, however, retains the original panelling. Some has also been reused elsewhere, as in the batten door leading to the cellar. Exposed structural members are chamfered with "lamb's tongue" stops. (Photograph 9). 2.

The second floor is sheathed with featheredge pine panelling. This is original, having been merely stripped and refinished in 1955. 3. A large summer beam runs in a transverse direction to that of the first floor. Traces of a scab which once supported a joist can be seen on the summer beam. 4. The attic of the ell reveals that the roof is supported by common rafters with purlins pegged into place. Mortises exist for collars which have been removed, probably in the 18th-century. Another structural feature of interest is a yoke header which supports a joist in the cellar. The joist is not carried over to the sill, where it would be directly above the cellar door. Instead, the yoke header supports the joist end. (Photograph 10).

The modern addition of 1955 is entered from the ell on both the second and third floors. The original outer door on the east side of the ell was removed during this remodelling. 5. The addition is built of standardized 20th-century materials. The first floor contains a kitchen with modern appliances. A modern bathroom occupies the second floor.

A "summer kitchen" attached to the rear of the house was removed during the 20th-century. This was of later date than either the main body of the house or the ell.

Despite extensive remodelling in 1955, much of the interior fabric of the building survives. Damage from years of neglect made this work necessary. Panelling in the front of the house, for example, had rodent damage. Portions of this were replaced with similar material salvaged by a Norwich dealer. Most of the woodwork, however, remains intact.

Endnotes

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1. Kelly, J. Frederick. and Henry S. Sketchbook, Volume III, pages 198-199, for unusual lock and latch combination. (August 8, 1946)
2. Jarvis, Henry B., Interview December 2, 1980. Mr. Jarvis lived next door to the Whittlesey house from 1948 to 1966. A ship carpenter, he loaned Mr. Millerbaugh the molding plane with which he reproduced the shadow molding. By carefully comparing the panels, it was possible to determine which had been installed in 1955.
3. Jarvis, Ibid, on stripping and refinishing pine panelling.
4. Kelly, op.cit., page 198 for a sketch of the scab.
5. Ibid.

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/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1693, c1750

Builder/Architect John Whittlesey, Jr.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Whittlesey, Jr. house is representative of two distinct periods of colonial American architecture. The first is typified by the 1693 ell. The use of featheredge panelling, shadow molding, and very heavy posts, girds, and summer beams are characteristic of this period. A high degree of craftsmanship is evident in its construction. The second period, the Georgian, is more formal and stylized, with a conscious effort at symmetry. The interior features—wainscotted panelling, dados, chair rails, bolection molding around fireplaces—are intact and represent well the distinctive characteristics of this style. (Criterion C). The Whittlesey house was closely associated with the Whittlesey family, co-operators of the ferry across the Connecticut River. The Whittleseys played an important role in the development of the Ferry District, a community based on the ferry landing but also engaged in farming and other supplementary pursuits. (Criterion A). The association of the house with the eccentric William B. Goodwin is also significant. Goodwin, a wealthy Hartford resident, had planned to reconstruct the Saybrook Fort. The Whittlesey house, which he erroneously dated to 1648, was to be the centerpiece of the proposed reconstruction. The concept of collecting historic houses for display elsewhere was typical of this stage in preservation thinking (Criterion B).

Entries in an account book kept by John Whittlesey, Jr. indicate the purchase of "mantel trese" or fireplace lintels on April 22, 1693. Another entry of the same date records a days work felling timber and five-and-a-half days hewing timber. 1. Together with the fact that Whittlesey married on May 9, 1693, the documentary evidence of the construction date seems clear. 2.

The construction of the 1693 ell, originally an independent house, corresponds to many of the characteristics of 17th-century construction. Massive post and beam framing, mortised and tenoned, the use of collars and purlins in the roof, shadow molding, featheredge panelling, and chamfered structural members with stops are all typical of this period. In particular, the "lamb's tongue" stops (Photograph 9) and shadow (or quirk) molding bear marked resemblance to those in extant 17th-century structures along the Connecticut coastline. The Caleb Dudley house of 1690 in Guilford is virtually identical in these details, a fact which may be accounted for by familial ties. 3.

The framing of the original portion of the house displays several idiosyncrasies. The header or "yoke header" in the cellar, utilizing a curved piece of oak to support a joist end, is unusual. (Photograph 10). The "scab" which once was attached to the second floor summer beam to support a joist end, is also of interest. The carefully hewn corner posts, flare upwards to form gunstock corner posts, as they are commonly named. Construction and design of the ell is derived from traditional building methods.

In contrast to the 1693 ell, the mid-eighteenth century portion of the house

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Gates, Gilman C. Saybrook at the Mouth of the Connecticut. New Haven: Wilson H. Lee, 1935.
- Goodwin, William B. Correspondence. In William B. Goodwin Collection, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Ct.
- Goodwin, William B. Correspondence with Mr. Harry A. Wright of Springfield,

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 3

Quadrangle name Old Lyme

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A

18	7	2	0	8	8	0	4	5	7	6	7	7	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

A description of the boundaries of the property may be found in Volume 91, page 39, of the Old Saybrook Land Records at the Office of the Town Clerk, Town Hall, 302 Main Street, Old Saybrook, Ct.

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, National Register Nominations Consultant edited by: John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date 6/6/80

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 566-3005

city or town Hartford, Ct. 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date 5/18/84

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

Linda McClelland
Keeper of the National Register

date 10/26/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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is more formal in design and construction. Various dates assigned to the house cannot be substantiated: 1740 by Mrs. Millerbaugh, 1750 by William B. Goodwin, and the 1760s by Elmer D. Keith. As the final division of property of John Whittlesey, Jr. took place in 1750, this author has chosen to assign that approximate date. The Georgian style in which the house is built is typical of this period. The symmetry of composition, casing of all exposed elements, lack of summers on the second floor, are all common features of this style and period.

Unlike the typology developed by J. Frederick Kelly for the evolution of the colonial house plan, the Whittlesey house retained the older portion of the house as a distinct entity attached as an ell to the rear. In Kelly's typology, a one-room house in floor plan is added to with a second room to create a bilaterally symmetrical house with a center chimney enclosed by the two rooms. A lean-to addition later results in the "saltbox" profile. Several houses in the vicinity of the Whittlesey house developed in a parallel fashion to it. The Buckingham house, now on display in Mystic Seaport, has a 17th-century ell attached to a mid-18th-century Georgian house. It seems likely that the Whittlesey house represents a strong local tradition or sentiment in the re-use of older structures.

The Ferry District, within which the Whittlesey house is located, is a distinct settlement within the town of Old Saybrook. In 1662, the General Court of Connecticut authorized the establishment of a ferry across the Connecticut River at Tilley's Point in Saybrook. John Whittlesey, a resident of Saybrook, and his brother-in-law William Dudley, from Guilford, were appointed to operate the ferry jointly. The point of land near which the ferry wharf was located soon became known as Ferry Point instead of Tilley's Point. The Whittlesey and Dudley families received grants of land in the vicinity, and a small community based on the ferry operation and farming developed. In the 19th-century, the cluster of homes around the ferry became known as the Ferry District, after the title of the local school district. The fortunes of the Ferry District depended very directly upon the ferry. Prospering during the 17th-, 18th-, and early 19th-centuries, the district was composed of a number of houses ranging in style from Georgian through the Greek Revival. With the introduction of steamboat traffic on Long Island Sound in 1816, and rail service in 1852, the importance of the Ferry District as a link in the New York-Boston route declined. The ferry continued as a local service, but its importance was diminished. In 1911, construction of a highway bridge rendered the ferry system obsolete. Ironically, the construction of the Baldwin Bridge in the 1950s served to destroy much of the integrity of the Ferry District. Many houses were removed, and the local road network realigned.

John Whittlesey, Jr. was a shoemaker as well as a farmer. He also participated in operating the ferry with his father and uncle, although this was not his major source of income. Whittlesey's direct descendents continued to own the property until 1919. In 1925, William B. Goodwin, a wealthy insurance executive and relative of J.P. Morgan, purchased the property. Goodwin, believing the house to date from 1648, intended to move the older section to Saybrook Point, there to be the nucleus of a reconstruction of Saybrook Fort. 4. This grandiose

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failed, however, and Goodwin offered the house for sale to parties interested in dismantling the 17th-century portion and removing it to another site. Due to his intention to dismantle the house, few alterations were made to it during his ownership. Because of inadequate maintenance, the house deteriorated seriously. The house was finally sold by Goodwin's widow to John Millerbaugh, who undertook extensive rehabilitation.

Goodwin was noted for several reasons. A self-proclaimed archaeologist, he purchased "Mystery Hill" in New Hampshire, a grouping of stone structures which Goodwin believed to be the product of Irish monks antedating Columbus' discovery of America. His reconstruction of the site to conform to his theory destroyed the archaeological value of the site, which was probably colonial in origin. A genealogist and devotee of colonial history, Goodwin was also obsessed with the history of Saybrook and the fort there. His proposed reconstruction of the fort was linked with a desire to glorify his personal origins. The only visible reminder of this project is the statue of Lion Gardiner, commander of the fort, which Goodwin and others had erected near the site of the Saybrook fort. Reconstructions such as that proposed by Goodwin were a phenomenon of the early 20th-century. Fortunately for the integrity of the fort site, Goodwin's plans never reached fruition.

The John Whittlesey, Jr. house preserves evidence of its 17th-century and 18th-century construction. It is associated with a local family important in the development of early transportation across the Connecticut River. It was also part of a small farming community organized about the ferry landing. The association of the house with William B. Goodwin's schemes for the reconstruction of Saybrook Fort is also of local interest.

Footnotes

1. Whittlesey, John, Jr., "Accounts of shoemaking and repair; glovemaking, weaving, etc., and grocery accounts." Manuscript at Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Ct., no. 73534, page 48.
2. Ibid, pages 54, 42.
3. Kelly, J. Frederick. Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924, page 68, fig. 76; page 145, fig. 155, for details of lamb's tongue stops and molding in Caleb Dudley house.
4. Goodwin, William B. Letter to Gilman C. Gates (?), Feb. 28, 1928:
It is my plan to move the house down the river to the original fort site as an example of one of the earliest houses if it can be done reasonably & put it on some of the high land. As I shall not be ready to do this until late in the summer I suggest that we do not discuss it now or inform our tenant that we have any such plans.
Transcript of letter made by Mrs. Cleo Millerbaugh, in the possession of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Huber, East Lyme, Ct.

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- Massachusetts, at Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Ct.
- Keith, Elmer D. Correspondence regarding the Buckingham House. At Central files in the W. Blunt White Memorial Library at Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Ct.
- Keith, Elmer D. Letter to John Millerbaugh, April 11, 1955, in the possession of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Huber, 82 Plant's Dam Road, East Lyme, Ct.
- Kelly J. Frederick, and Henry S. Sketchbook, Volume III, manuscript in possession of Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Ct.
- Kelly, J. Frederick. Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924.
- Millerbaugh, Cleo M. Miscellaneous notes and papers relating to the John Whittlesey, Jr. house. Mss in possession of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Huber, 82 Plant's Dam Road, East Lyme, Ct.
- Millerbaugh, John. Plans of John Whittlesey, Jr. house, 1955. Mss. in possession of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Huber, 82 Plant's Dam Road, East Lyme, Ct.
- Whittlesey, John Jr. Accounts of shoemaking and repair, glovemaking, weaving, etc., and grocery accounts," Mss at Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Ct.
- Whittlesey, John Jr. Probate Records. 1750. Guilford Probate District. In Archives, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Ct.

Interviews

- Jarvis, Henry B. Interview May 21, 1980 at Mystic Seaport.
- Jarvis, Henry B. Interview December 2, 1980 at John Whittlesey Jr. house, Old Saybrook.