

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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MAY 1978

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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

Henry Hooker House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

111 High Road

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kensington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First -- William R. Cotter

STATE

Connecticut

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

Hartford

COUNTY

CODE

03

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Richard S., Barbara A. and Connie Genovese

STREET & NUMBER

111 High Road

CITY, TOWN

Kensington

__ VICINITY OF

CT 06037

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Berlin Land Records, Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

240 Kensington Road

CITY, TOWN

Berlin

CT 06037

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

12/1/77

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

59 South Prospect St., Hartford, Connecticut 06106

STATE

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 Henry Hooker House is a five-bay eighteenth-century house set well back from an ancient highway known as the High Road, now state highway No. 72 A, in the Kensington section of the Town of Berlin, Connecticut. In the mid-nineteenth century the house was substantially modernized but has been unaltered in the last one hundred years.

In addition to the five bays typical of the eighteenth century, other characteristics of the period which are present in the house include sixteen inch sills which rest on the stone foundations, and corner posts which provide for the hewn overhang of the second story over the first and the third story over the second. Summer beams, cased in, support the ceilings of the two front rooms, as was customary in eighteenth century houses.

The stone foundations clearly delimit the original structure, which is the entire front section of the house as seen in the picture (Photo 1), not including an ell to the rear which is not visible in the picture.

In the cellar are joists of undressed tree timber which support the first floor. In the center of the cellar ceiling, where alterations obviously have occurred, are sawn members from another century adjacent to the undressed timbers. This juxtaposition of the old and the new is shown in the picture (Photo 2) where the tongue of the original undressed joist is seen as it enters the groove of the girt, while on the other side of the girt the sawn wood members of another era are in place.

The introduction of this section of new framing was carried out at the location in the center of the house where a central chimney would be expected. It is in this era that the cellar ceiling has a rectangle of new (mid-nineteenth century) members obviously installed at a much later date than the original work. This evidence suggests that the central chimney, normally an important feature of an eighteenth-century house, was removed as part of the mid-nineteenth century program of modernization. The dirt floor of the cellar underneath the section of new framing is several inches lower than the rest of the floor, as though it had been scooped out, suggesting the presence originally of a massive foundation to support the center chimney.

Presumably, the purpose of removing the central chimney was to make room for the new central hall which now rises from the first floor to the third, thereby making the house conform to contemporary fashionable floor plans. Originally, steep stairs in three flights presumably were in place in constricted space in front of the chimney. Removal of this stairway and removal of the chimney itself made possible the "up to date" revision of the floor plan.

The new center hall is light and airy and includes balustraded stairs in a straight run up one wall from first to second floor (Photo 3). The appearance and detailing of the Victorian hall and stairway are not unusual for their times. What is interesting and unusual is that they are there at all, installed as a fashionable improvement designed to increase the spaciousness and comfort of the house.

Removal of the center chimney did introduce the question of what to do about flues for the fireplaces. This need was met by building two new, smaller brick chimneys, one on either side of the center hall, by

(continued)

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Henry Hooker House

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which flues from the fireplaces are carried to a single stack in the roof. New contemporary fireplaces were installed at the time, one of which is shown in the picture (Photo 4).

The center hall and its stairs continue up to the third floor (Photo 5) where a window was introduced at the time in the front roof which lights the entire central hall.

This new dormer window on the front of the house was installed in the general revision of the roof which was part of the over-all modernization program. The new roof treatment was again "up to date," indeed up to the minute, for it included elements of Swiss cottage influence, and perhaps a suggestion of the stick style. The roof has broad overhang supported by paired sawn brackets. The gabled dormer rests on similar brackets. The end gables and the gable of the dormer have decorative braces which include turned spindles and sawn drop finials.

As part of the roof treatment the gable ends at third floor level have vertical board and batten siding which is consistent with the modernization theme and contrasts with the clapboards at first and second story levels. On the front, under the eaves, the house was given flush horizontal board siding.

A small front porch with plain columns supporting low gabled roof completed the re-working of the house. The pitch of the porch roof approximates the pitch of the gable of the roof dormer above it thereby giving the center of the facade a vertical line of interest to balance the strong horizontal lines of the eighteenth century hewn overhangs and the bracketed eaves of the nineteenth century roof.

The house was once the centerpiece of the Hooker Farm. The farm was now been sold off in small parcels for development although the neighborhood still has a semi-rural atmosphere. The dichotomy is illustrated by two neighbors; next door is a flower shop, while diagonally across the street is another Hooker family house of similar origins. The old High Road is now a well travelled state highway. The houses along the road are a mixture of old and new, and most of the residents are employed in nearby urban centers. The Hooker House and others like it are reminders of an earlier era.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1769, mid-19C

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, the Henry Hooker House is of unusual interest because it provides a clear example of a nineteenth century program of alterations to an eighteenth century house. Such changes were not uncommon but it is uncommon to have a structure which so clearly demonstrates the changes, and which has not been further altered in the subsequent century. Historically, the house has value because it was built by a direct descendant of Rev. Thomas Hooker (1586-1647), founder of Hartford; it continued in the Hooker family for a century and three-quarters; and the distinguished nineteenth century owner was a leader in Connecticut's famous carriage manufacturing industry in New Haven.

Elijah Hooker (1746-1823), who built the house about 1769, was a seventh generation descendant of Rev. Thomas Hooker, as shown in the Hooker family genealogy of 1909. He built in the manner typical of his times, using post-and-lintel construction of heavy oak timbers fastened together by mortise and tenon. His descendants, in the middle of the nineteenth century, felt the need to modernize which they did by giving the old house the currently fashionable feature of a center hall, airy and well lighted, under a new bracketed roof, with a columned portico as the finishing touch.

No doubt a program of modernization more or less along these lines was carried out in many Revolutionary War era homes during the Victorian years. What is exceptional here is the opportunity clearly and precisely to observe and delineate the changes, for no further structural alterations have been made since the Victorian era.

The alterations carried out at that time were reasonably extensive and required considerable expenditure of time and money, particularly the task of removing the huge center chimney and replacing it with the two smaller ones. The Hooker family was able to afford such renovations to the homestead because of their association with the carriage manufacturing business in New Haven.

Henry Hooker (1809-1873), born in Kensington, was an entrepreneur in the carriage manufacturing trade and lived in New Haven while maintaining the Kensington family home as a summer residence. After an apprenticeship close to home he worked as a young man in Savannah. Such association between New Haven and the South in the carriage trade was not unusual and had to do with economics stemming from the fact that a carriage was a luxury item. Few families could afford one. Consequently, marketing had to be keyed to those areas where well-to-do families existed in some number. The plantation owners of the pre-Civil War South

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .49 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8
ZONE	EASTING

6	8	4	1	0	0
NORTHING					

4612

4	6	1	2
NORTHING			

4	8	1	0
NORTHING			

B

ZONE	EASTING

NORTHING			

C

ZONE	EASTING

NORTHING			

D

ZONE	EASTING

NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Map # 2-3, Block # 22 and Lot # 1A, Berlin Land Records, Town Hall, 240 Kensington Road, Berlin, Connecticut 06037.

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

David F. Ransom, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

17 August 1977

STREET & NUMBER

33 Sunrise Hill Drive

TELEPHONE

203 521-2518

CITY OR TOWN

West Hartford,

STATE

CT 06107

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 5/19/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST Bill Tolovick
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11/29/78
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE Nov 27, 1978

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constituted such a market, and the demands of the South were an important consideration in the conduct of the carriage manufacturing business in New Haven.

While Henry Hooker was not alone in his cultivation of southern interests, he did carry his affiliation further than most by marrying Miss Charlotte Lum of New Orleans and becoming a principal there in the carriage manufacturing firm of J.A. Lum & Co., presumably in association with other members of her family. This enterprise was begun in 1855 and was ended by the advent of the Civil War.

Meanwhile, from 1832 on, with a series of partners, he manufactured carriages in New Haven. His career reached its high point ten years before his death when in 1863 he joined with James Brewster, the most famous name in the New Haven carriage industry, and others to buy out G. & D. Cook & Co. The new firm became known as Henry Hooker & Co. and was an enterprise of considerable proportions. The factory, five stories high, had 375,000 square feet of floor space and employed 300 men. The site of the factory was a location running from Wall Street to Grove Street, later occupied by the New Haven Arena.

The New Haven carriage trade suffered a severe blow in the loss of the southern market at the time of the Civil War which proved to be a permanent loss because post-war economic conditions in the South precluded resumption of carriage sales. Then, with the approach of the turn of the century the carriage became obsolete and the industry faded out. Henry Hooker & Co., managed after Henry's death in 1873 by his sons, did continue in business into the twentieth century and did make the effort to adjust to changing times by manufacturing some automobile bodies, but without success, and so concluded its affairs.

The Henry Hooker House combines interest as a Revolutionary War structure built and modernized to Victorian standards by a famous Connecticut family and association with a once prosperous Connecticut industry rendered obsolete by advancing times.

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