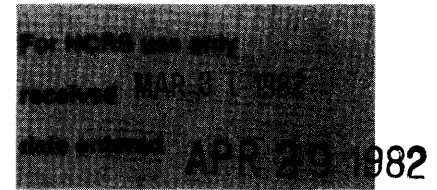


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Parker-Hutchinson Farm

and/or common Samuel Parker House

2. Location

street & number Parker Bridge Road, 3/10mi. south of Bunker Hill Rd., east side
N/A not for publication

city, town Coventry N/A vicinity of congressional district 4

state Connecticut code 09 county Tolland code 013

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

4. Owner of Property

name Alan R. and Laura S. Smaus

street & number Parker Bridge Road

city, town Coventry N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office, Town Office Building

street & number Rte. 31

city, town Coventry state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect St.

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 Parker-Hutchinson House in Coventry, Connecticut is a simple, one-and-one-half-story "cape" farmhouse built during the second half of the 18th-century. Surrounded by open fields and woodlands, the house stands as part of a farm complex on a high bank overlooking a narrow, winding road and a wooded ravine. A paved driveway to the north side of the house leads up the bank to a group of barns behind. No other buildings are visible from the rural site, despite an impressive vista over low hills to the south. To the north, a brook runs down a nearby hill past stone walls and remnant foundations of former outbuildings. An original field-stone retaining wall banks the site at the front and sides of the house, containing the built-up plot necessary to level the once-sloping site. The front wall is pierced at the center by a set of stone steps leading from the road up to the front yard. A pair of large, old maple trees stands in front of the wall (Photograph 1).

The entire acreage of the Smaus property (8 acres to the east, or behind the house) is included in the nomination as this consists of farm and woodland that relate essentially to the history and use of the buildings described.

EXTERIOR

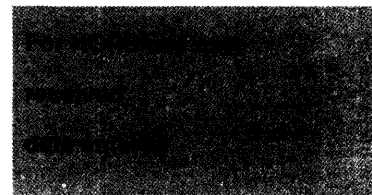
Typical of later 18th-century houses of the "cape" form in eastern Connecticut, the Parker-Hutchinson House has a symmetrically arranged five-bay front with a central doorway and paired windows. Rectangular in shape, with a center chimney, the house has a particularly high and steep gable roof, the back of which slopes in a slight curve to shelter a low, open lean-to at the north rear corner, giving that side of the house a salt-box shape (Photograph 2). A new (1956) second-story dormer projects from this section of the roof, and a new, one-and-one-half-story gambel-roofed ell extends from the remaining (south-east) rear section of the house. On the south side, two mid-19th-century bays of different styles project from the wall of the main body of the house (Photograph 3).

The foundation of the house is dry-laid fieldstone supporting large, cut granite blocks. There is an exterior entry to the basement on the south wall, and two small, rectangular windows are cut into the foundation on the north side. The full basement is interrupted by a massive chimney foundation at its center. Built out toward the first floor, the chimney base measures seven-by-nine feet at the bottom, and nine-by-twelve feet at the top. Huge fieldstones up to four-and-one-half feet long are set horizontally into the lower base. On the east side of the chimney foundation is evidence of a two-foot rounded opening, now closed off. The fieldstone chimney is "topped off" in brick at the roofline, and is simply detailed near the cap by a double string-course of projecting bricks.

The front of the house is ornamented only by the design of the front door, which is probably late Greek Revival, and consists of two full-length vertical panels, inset with moldings and flat, one-inch square blocks set in each corner (Photograph 4). A small glass transom light, partly hidden by the cornice, caps the doorway. The door and window openings are simply framed; the latter contain 19th-century, six-over-six sash. A one-inch wood strip runs between the pairs of front windows at the

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sill level. Wrought iron blind catches, reverse-S curve in design, remain from the past use of exterior shutters.

The two separate bay window sections, built on to the south side of the house in 1853, differ in appearance. The south-east bay, which serves more as an extension of the rear room, is framed at right angles to the house wall, is clapboarded, has a triple window, and a half-gable roof. The south-west bay is more stylized, with clipped, or diagonal corners which form an obliquely-angled, three-sided bay. Flush, wide-board horizontal siding surrounds the long, paired windows, and the whole bay is capped by a molding of the same design as the main cornice of the house. Both bays have brick foundations.

The cornice consists of a simple, graduated molding which projects five inches and provides a visually neat transition between the wall and roof planes.

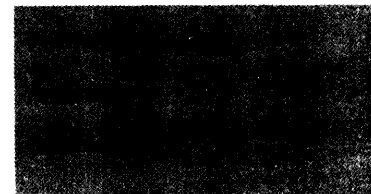
INTERIOR

The plans of the first and second stories center around the chimney and are mainly intact. The first-floor plan consists of a small entrance vestibule, one room to either side of the chimney, and a long, rectangular room behind, now a combined kitchen and dining area. Walls originally separating the front and rear rooms on the south side have been removed, and the original rooms are lengthened slightly by the 19th-century bays. A rear entrance in the present south-east room was also installed in 1853. Adjacent to this, a small, lean-to wing originally projected to the rear, corresponding to the low-sloping line of the other (north) rear corner. An outside door at the center of the back wall opened into the kitchen. The lean-to and the original rear door are gone, having been removed for the addition of the 1956 ell. This section is entered off of the kitchen and has provided space for an ample, new staircase. This replaced the original front stair, which stood in front of the chimney. The shallow proportions of this front space indicate this original dog-leg stair to have been extremely narrow and steep. As evidenced by original floor-boards on the second story, this stair split at the top, giving access to both bedrooms. Another stair at the rear of the house linked the north bedroom with the kitchen below. The second story consists of a chamber to either side of the chimney. While the new ell does not infringe upon the plan of the upper floor, it expands the headroom of the south chamber.

Like the exterior of the house, the interior is simple, with ornamentation confined to the fireplace mantels and to the front door. Three of the six original fireplaces are exposed, including those in the kitchen, the south living room, and the south bedroom (Photographs 5 & 6). The cooking fireplace (Photograph 5) is characteristically large, with a single granite lintel, and an independent beehive oven set off to one side, now sealed off. The mantel consists of a flat, plain frame, a seven-inch lintel panel, and is capped by a simply molded shelf with curved corners. The two other exposed mantels are smaller in scale and display slightly greater refinement in their proportions. These have higher, 12-inch friezes,

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and deeper but more delicately molded shelves with squared ends. The fireplace in the living room (Photograph 6) is flanked by original cabinets built into the wall.

A few feet of horizontally-laid wainscoting remains on the kitchen fireplace wall. Posts and beams are simply encased throughout the interior of the house. Original floorboards remain on the second floor only. Nearly all the interior batten doors remain, each consisting of two planks laid vertically, and joined with a horizontal batten in the upper and lower sections of the door. The smaller doors have small HL hinges, and the front door described earlier has two "bean end", two-foot iron strap hinges on the interior side.

The north front room on the first floor was sheathed and given a new ceiling and linoleum floor during the 1956 renovation. The northeast walls of the kitchen were also panelled at this time. The present ceilings in the kitchen, dining area, and south-west room were probably re-done at the time of the 1853 additions to these rooms, and may cover once-visible, cased summer beams.

FRAMING

Most of the original framing remains, and is generally typical of later 18th-century "cape" dwellings. Square-hewn posts and beams are framed with mortise and tenon joints in the usual system. However, two less characteristic features are, 1) the use of solid wood planking for the walls, which identify the structure as a "plank house", and 2) the absence of purlins in the framing of the roof. In the first, the otherwise typical post-and-beam bents are filled in with 12 to 18-inch, vertically-laid, one-inch oak planking, which provides a solid surface onto which the clapboards are nailed. In the roof, the framing is relatively light, and consists of common rafters and a ridgepole. According to J. Frederick Kelly in The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, the omission of purlins with the concurrent use of a ridgepole is unusual.

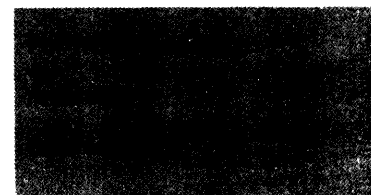
Of all the exterior elevations of the house, the south and east are the most severely altered. In these, the high, blocky, gambrel-roofed ell obscures the low-slung, rear plane of the original roof. However, this view is available only from the south and rear meadows, and the usual or public view of a picturesque, unified cluster of farmhouse and barns in an intact, natural setting, still evokes a strong historical sense.

OUTBUILDINGS

Three, 19th-century frame structures of a once-extensive complex of farm and utilitarian buildings remain on the property (Photograph 7). The existing buildings, which stand at oblique angles behind the house, are a sheep barn with attached outhouse, a small shed, and a one-and-one-half-story horse barn. All three structures have fieldstone foundations, vertical wood siding, and shingled, gable roofs.

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The sheep barn (Photograph 8) is typically framed, displaying hewn, solidly-braced posts and beams.(Photograph 9). The barn features an open end wall to the south, allowing the animals to roam freely in and out, and an earth floor. A small, 19th-century outhouse with three seats and board-and-batten siding is attached to the rear corner of the barn, on the east side.(Photograph 10).

Situated at a 90-degree angle between the sheep barn and the horse barn is a shed of approximately 8 X 15 feet, with a door in the end wall facing the back of the house. There is a small window in each of the long sides. The exterior vertical siding is tongue-in-groove. The interior has mid-20th-century sheathing and a modern chimney stack at the rear end wall. Clearly, the shed was built for human use, and was used in conjunction with one or more of the several cottage industries that was operated on the property during the 19th century.(Photograph 11).

The horse barn (Photograph 12) is the largest of the outbuildings. Built to accommodate larger livestock and the storage of hay, this structure has a sliding door in the center of the long side facing the house, horizontally-sheathed interior stalls, and windowed hay lofts in the end sections. As in the sheep barn, the frame is of square hewn timbers mortised together.

Behind the outbuildings are two, parallel fieldstone walls built to channel the farm animals in and out of the pasture behind. Other stone walls criss-cross the property, some of which are sections of foundations of other outbuildings, now gone, which are aligned roughly parallel to the driveway (Figure 1). These foundations probably mark the sites of a cooper's shop, cider mill, hat shop, and a well-house, structures which are documented in property deeds, in a book by a Parker family member, and in photographs taken in the 1940's. The latter show a small, completely enclosed well-house with a gambrel roof, situated in the north angle of the driveway and the road.

Footnote

1. Norris G. Osborn, ed. History of Connecticut, Vol. IV, p. 254

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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry(cottage)	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
Criterion A		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1850 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Parker-Hutchinson Farm is outstanding as an unusually intact site of several cottage industries associated with the development of Tolland County, Connecticut, as a major center of fiber and wool production (Criterion A). Throughout the 19th-century, the farm was the site of the small-scale production of both raw and finished materials, including flax, wool, cider, hats, barrels, and carpets for local mills and markets. The farmhouse itself is architecturally characteristic of eastern Connecticut dwellings built during the 18th century, and remains unusually intact both in its physical fabric and 19th-century farm setting.

The large-scale commercial production and processing of flax and wool in Connecticut did not gain real impetus until the first decade of the 19th-century. The introduction of a superior breed of sheep from Merino, Spain, combined with the elimination of foreign competition during the War of 1812 and other factors, led to the construction boom of dozens of mills along Tolland and Windham Counties' many rivers and streams. By 1820, the development of power looms and increasingly mechanized fulling and carding mills had spurred the local farm production of flax and wool. Still, the finishing of home-grown flax and wool remained partly a cottage industry throughout the century, despite continuing advancements in the development of mill machinery¹. By the turn of the present century, water-abundant Tolland County would lead the state in the production of wool. Advantageously located along the Boston-Hartford turnpike, and fueled by two rivers, the town of Coventry in 1869 boasted two major wool manufacturers and four fiber factories.

The early raising and processing of flax on the Parker-Hutchinson Farm is reported in Orra Parker Phelps' book The Martin Box, a reminiscence of childhood on the nearby Martin Parker farm. In the book, Phelps recalls her aunt, Nancy Parker Hutchinson, describing flax production on the property "in long-ago times"¹. In this process, the flax stem was beaten out, soaked in the nearby brook, thrashed, and spun into thread for weaving. The finished cloth was then taken to a natural pool across the road to be soaked again and laid out to bleach². The precise time period of this activity at the farm is not known, but appears to be during the later 18th or early 19th-centuries.

The first evidence of sheep farming on the property dates to the 1850 inventory of Asa Parker, Jr., which lists 20 sheep in addition to the usual stock of two oxen, three cows, and two horses and pigs. Generous amounts of hay, feed, and vegetables indicate crop farming took place here also. Sheep farming on the property was probably phased out in the 1870's, during the final years of Asa Parker's and his son-in-law Andrew J. Hutchinson's lives.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cole, J.R. History of Tolland County. New York: W.W. Preston and Co., 1888.
Coventry Census Books: 1800, 1830, 1840, 1850.
Coventry Land Records: Vol 14 p 544, Vol 21 p 430, Vol 32 p 308, Vol 204 p 178.

10. Geographical Data **ACREAGE: NOT VERIFIED** **UTM: NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property c. 8

Quadrangle name Columbia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	7	2	2	6	2	0	4	6	2	4	2	6	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the entire acreage owned by Alan and Laura Smaus as described in Coventry Land Records Vol. 204, p 178.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alison Gilchrist, Consultant, National Register Nominations

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date May 1981

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 263 4427

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date March 11, 1982

For HCRS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/29/82

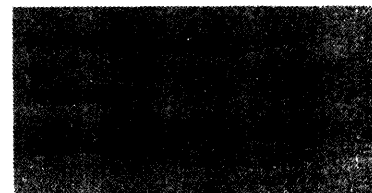
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Asa Parker's daughter, Nancy, and Andrew J. Hutchinson had joined Parker to live on the farm in 1850. In the ensuing years, the Hutchinsons introduced a number of small-scale home operations. The 1850 census reveals that in addition to managing the farm for his father-in-law, Hutchinson owned a small, woolen hat-making business. It is not known where the factory was located, however judging from its modest description in the census, and the known avid involvement of his wife, Nancy, in the handling of wool, it is probable that this operation was located on the farm.

Another activity was the wool production and carpet-weaving carried out by Nancy Hutchinson. The author of The Martin Box remembers having been fascinated by her aunt's occupation in this, and the several spinning wheels, wool winders, looms, and copious amounts of woven domestic items listed in Nancy Hutchinson's estate suggest that this was a fairly intensive cloth-making operation. It is not known whether any of these products were sold commercially.

Phelps' book also describes a cider mill on the property operated by an overhead windlass which, attached to a horse driven in circles around the mill, would work the press. Phelps mentions that this was the only cider mill "around for miles", which suggests that it served many local farmers who had orchards. An apple orchard and a very old grape arbor remain on the property, and probably date from this period.

Other cottage industries of the farm included a cooper works listed in 1816 and 1823 deeds, and bee-keeping for the production of beeswax and honey.

While at present the farm is used primarily for keeping riding horses, the owners plan to return the property to a measure of its former self-sufficiency by raising a major crop of organic herbs and vegetables, restoring the apple and grape orchards, and constructing a windmill for electric power.

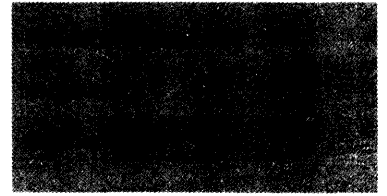
While the construction of the house has traditionally been attributed to Samuel Parker, a founder of the town of Coventry and early selectman, militia captain, and church deacon, research has been unable to substantiate this theory. The land records do, however, bear out the early residency of Samuel Parker's grandson, Asa Parker Sr., a farmer, from 1813. His son, Asa Parker Jr., took over the farm at his death and later shared the property with Nancy and Andrew Hutchinson. They occupied the place until 1886, whereupon it was sold out of the Parker family.

FOOTNOTES

1. Orra Parker Phelps, The Martin Box, p. 137
2. Ibid. p. 138
3. Ibid. p. 137

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- Osborn, Norris Galpin, ed. History of Connecticut. Vol. IV. New York:
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- Phelps, Orra Parker. When I was a Girl in the Martin Box. New York:
Island Press, 1949.
- Probate Records, Parker and Hutchinson Families. MS, Connecticut State
Library.
- Map of Coventry, Atlas of Tolland and Windham Counties. Hartford:
C.G. Keeney, 1869.

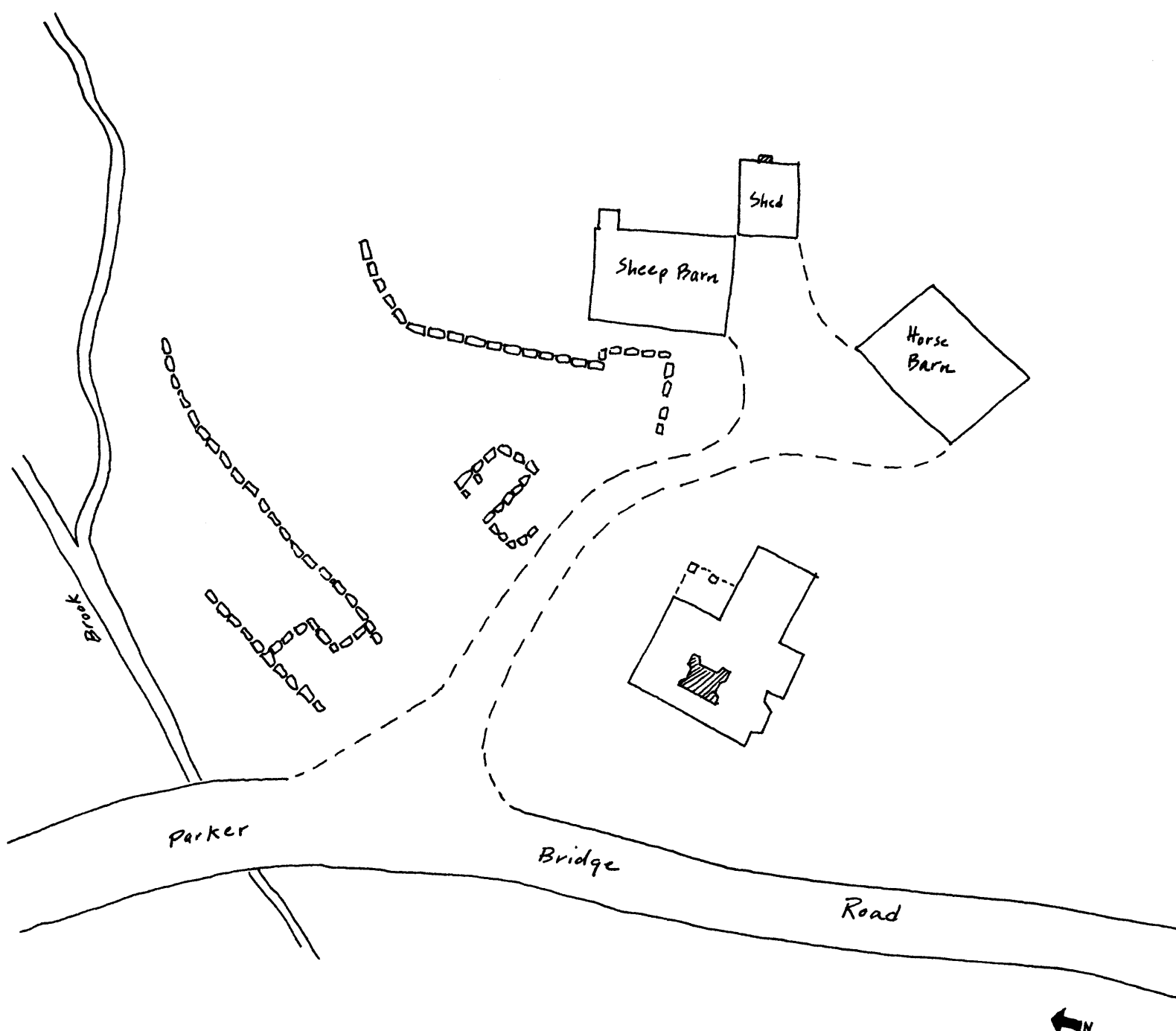


FIGURE 1
PLAN OF BUILDINGS ON PARKER-HUTCHINSON FARM, SHOWING FOUNDATIONS
OF FORMER OUTBUILDINGS
COVENTRY, CONNECTICUT