

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 24 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 29 1978

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
Elisha Bushnell House
AND/OR COMMON
Older Bushnell House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
1445 Boston Post Road
CITY, TOWN
Old Saybrook
STATE
Connecticut
VICINITY OF
Second - Christopher J. Dodd
COUNTY
Middlesex
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
CODE

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"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Richard H. and Margaret C. Oliphant
STREET & NUMBER
Neck Road
CITY, TOWN
Lyme
STATE
Connecticut 06371

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Town Hall
STREET & NUMBER
302 Main Street
CITY, TOWN
Old Saybrook
STATE
Connecticut 06371

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Works Progress Administration Census of Old Buildings
DATE
1930s
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Connecticut State Library
CITY, TOWN
Capitol Avenue, Hartford
STATE
Connecticut

(continued)

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 Older Bushnell House is located on the north side of the Boston Post Road (Route 1) just east of the Westbrook town line in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, on a 19 acre parcel of land. The land fronts on the Boston Post Road for about 690 feet and runs back to the north about 1,285 feet through Inland Wetlands to the railroad main line. Although this acreage has been associated with the house for many years, the town map also sets off a two acre house lot immediately surrounding the house and it is this two acre plot, only, which in conjunction with the house itself is the subject of the present nomination.

The house, which has recently been painted a blue green, is separated from the busy highway by a tall, thick hedge. Within the two acre house lot there is a large barn in good condition which with several other out buildings and the rocky, uneven terrain give the overall site a farm-like appearance.

As originally built in 1678 the house was small, consisting of two rooms and an attic around a stone chimney stack. Early in its history, possibly soon after 1700, the roof was raised as shown by J. Frederick Kelly's sketch described below, a lean-to was added, and an ell was built on to the east. More recently a shed dormer has been constructed across almost the full width of the back of the original house.

The Front (south) facade has a center doorway with no decorative embellishments under a hood added long after original construction. On either side of the door at the first floor level are two windows with six-over-nine sash. Presumably, these windows replace original casement windows of which there is no trace. At the second story are three six-over-six windows, one above the door and one over the space between the two first floor windows on each side. The ell to the right (east) has a six-over-six at ground level and a small two-over-two above, where the ell's shed roof joins the main house. (Photo 1). The west facade has a six-over-nine sash at the first floor and a two-over-two window in the attic gable above it, with a six-over-six sash at the second floor, off center to the rear. In the ell are a modern door and another two-over-two sash window comparable to that in the attic gable (Photo 2).

The rear (north) facade shows the most changes. The shed dormer, bow window and other windows appear to be twentieth century work. On the other hand, the change in the level of the eaves may well date from the time when these alterations first were made (Photo 3). The east elevation shows the ell. Stone steps lead up to the wall to the left of the door, indicating that the door has been moved. Possibly, this ell initially did not extend all the way across to the back of the house (Photo 4).

The great stone chimney is a striking feature of the house. It is all stone from the cellar floor up through the ridge of the roof to its open work and molded top (Photo 5). There are fireplaces only in the two first floor front rooms; no fireplace in the lean-to; no fireplaces in the second floor rooms -- indicating that the house originally consisted of only two rooms and garret. The chimney provides the stairs from the second floor to the attic; at its northeast corner its raking edge is shaped as steps, accessible because on the east side on the second floor the

continued

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Older Bushnell House

CONTINUATION SHEET Surveys

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

State Register of Historic Places
1967 State
Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Eliza Bushnell House
Old Saybrook, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Addendum ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

One of the dependencies on the grounds is a small structure referred to as the slave house. This building is one story high, 14 feet 6 inches deep, and 18 feet 6 inches wide. It has a gable roof covered with asbestos shingles, clapboard siding and, at one end, a brick chimney with moulded cap. There are two windows on the west and east sides of the house, one on the north side, and a door and one window on the south side. The windows are all 27 inches square, made up of three rows of four lights. Each pane is 5½ inches by 8 inches. Foundations of the house are built of stone. Hewn beams make up the interior framing of the structure.

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Older Bushnell House

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

chimney is not covered over or cased in.

The cellar is under the east room and the ell, while under the west room is a crawl space only. Moreover, the floor joists for the east room are smoothly sawn while the floor joists for the ell are round, unfinished timbers -- the opposite of what might be expected assuming that the ell was a later addition.

The cellar walls and foundations of the house are fieldstone. The exterior walls are clapboards thought to be old if not original but there is no hard evidence on this point. The roof has been covered in the twentieth century with wood shingles; the presence of many small purlins in the roof framing indicates that originally the house had a thatch roof.

Stairs from the cellar to the west room run in front of the chimney under the stairs from first to second floor, which are in the usual position in the interior porch running up from right to left. The first step faces the front door and is followed by four winders and then by a straight run to the west second floor room. There is no balustrade; the stairs are closed in by vertical boarding.

Vertical boarding, feather edged and beaded, lines the walls of all the rooms on the ground floor and is of excellent quality.

The west room has the larger of the two fireplaces. It has an oak lintel 10 feet 9 inches long by 15 inches high by 12 inches deep. This tremendous timber appears to have been charred over the centuries for it is now supported by a steel "I" beam unobtrusively fitted behind the front of the wood. The lower front edge of the lintel is chamfered with lamb's tongue stops. There are no summer beams in the house. The fireplace is stone, with an oven in the upper right corner of its back wall.

In the east room the fireplace, with crane in place, is smaller and is built of brick. Its oven is brought out to the plane of the wall to the right; in effect it is built into the wall of the room to the right of the fireplace. This fireplace has a stone lintel. The fireplace and stairway take up one wall of the room, the other three walls being covered by the feathered, beaded vertical boarding which is used throughout the first floor rooms.

The two front rooms have flared corner posts as does the lean-to, indicating that the lean-to was added at an early date. A door between two rooms in the lean-to has vertical boards and curved H shaped hinges with chicken heads at the tops. The inside of the front door to the house has wide horizontal boards. The first floor joists are supported directly by the foundation walls, the flooring laid on them, and the sills laid on top of the flooring. Thus, the sills project into the first floor rooms.

While the ceiling joists of the first floor run from side to side, upstairs they run from front to back. At chair rail height in the upstairs rooms are the original end girts installed for the original roof and supported by posts which are shouldered not gun stock, that is, the wider section is shaped to be parallel to the principal section of the post. The

(continued)

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Older Bushnell House

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

upstairs rooms are sheathed with horizontal boarding, beaded, and 18 to 19 inches wide. In the attic the change in the roof framing at the time the roof was raised is apparent, as shown by the Kelly sketch discussed below.

The house has been well maintained and is in excellent condition although new wooden gutters have been added, supported by unsuitable brackets (Photo 5). The premises are now vacant and the property is for sale.

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 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 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 1678

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Elisha Bushnell

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Older Bushnell House is one of the few seventeenth century houses in Connecticut whose authenticity is confirmed and whose original fabric clearly has integrity. The 1678 date for this house is confirmed by J. Frederick Kelly in his Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut.¹ The early date, combined with the original stone chimney, the original two rooms, the early evidence of raising the roof, and other features make the Older Bushnell House one of unusual significance. Its unique combination of antiquarian elements qualify the house as one of the finest resources in Connecticut's architectural history.

Kelly devotes two illustrations to the Older Bushnell House. The first of these (Kelly Figure 3, attached) shows the floor plan of the original two room structure. There is only one front window per room, and the two fireplaces are the same size, indicating that the fenestration has been changed and the oven in the east room brought forward as modernization improvements after the house was built.

The second illustration (Kelly Figure 26, attached) shows the change in the framing at the time the roof was raised and the lean-to added, plus details of the sills projecting into the first floor rooms and the shouldered post supporting the end girt.

With respect to the plan Kelly says, "The older Bushnell house near Saybrook (1678-1679) and the older Williams house in Wethersfield (circa 1680), Figures 3 and 4, furnish us with typical examples of the period. It will be seen that in each the chimney occupies its central position behind the stair porch.... In both the Older Bushnell and the older Williams houses a flight of steps leads down to the cellar from the hall. In each it is placed in front of the chimney and beneath the stairs to the second floor. In the Bushnell house the stairs are of stone, enclosed on either side by masonry walls. Such an arrangement is always indicative of very early work... In both of these houses the cellar extends beneath only one room."²

With respect to the sills projecting into the first floor rooms Kelly explains that in general in houses of this era "The joists of the first floor spanned the width of each room, and as a rule their ends were framed into the sills and the cellar girts. In a few houses, however, of very early date, the first-floor joists were built into the foundation walls, and the house sills laid over them.... As a result of such an arrangement, the sills necessarily projected into the rooms of the first floor...as³ may be seen from the cross section of the older Bushnell house...."³

In addition, Kelly⁴ refers to the shouldered posts in the Bushnell House as "a rare device,"⁴ and to the "very heavy" wood lintel spanning the fireplace of the west room.⁵

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1963 (republication of work first published by Yale University Press, 1924).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Two acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8
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7	1	7	0	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	7	3	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is the two acre house lot set off as part of parcel 26-11 on the town map.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

8 October 1977

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT 06106

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

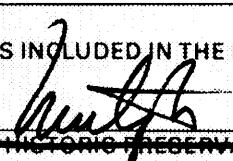


TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE 5/19/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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



DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/29/78

ATTEST:

William Telsovic

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

Nov 27, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Older Bushnell House

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

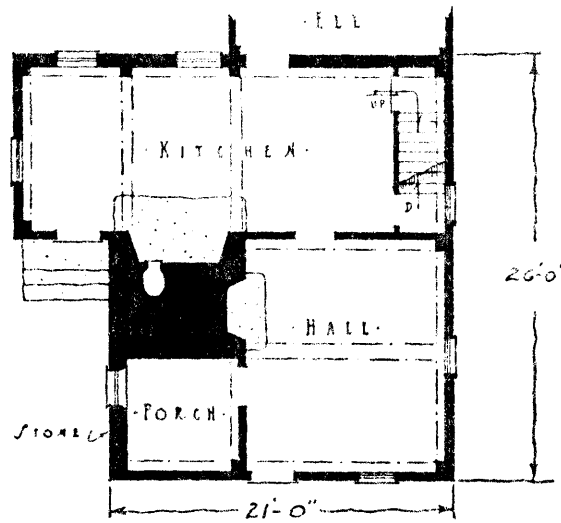
Such detailed recognition by Kelly enhances the clearly visible architectural and historic significance of the house. The clearly visible construction characteristics set for in the Description have been damaged relatively little over the centuries by thoughtless alterations, a fortunate circumstance. Altogether, the Older Bushnell House occupies an important place in Connecticut's limited inventory of authentic seventeenth century structures.

1. J. Frederick Kelly, A.I.A., Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963 (republication of work first published by Yale University Press, 1924), p. 26.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Ibid., p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 75.

The Thomas Lee house in East Lyme, which was begun in 1664, is, in its first stage, a perfect illustration of this type of plan. From A, Figure 1, it will be seen that the plan of this house was originally that of a single room, facing south, with a great stone chimney at the western end. It is probable that this chimney showed on the outside of the house for its entire height, as it does in the Norton house in Guilford to-day. (Plate I.) The stairs to the second floor were, at this stage, in the southwest corner, in front of the chimney stack. This plan of the Lee house in its first stage may be regarded as typical of the first or one-room period.

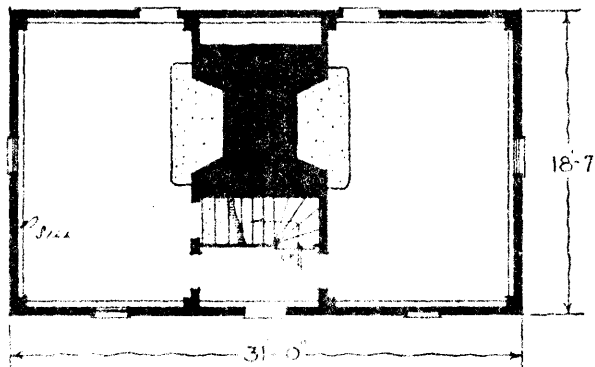
The Norton house in the town of Guilford (*circa* 1690), though essentially a house of one-room plan, indicates, by reason of its lean-to room at the rear, a slightly later development. (Figure 2.) Here, as in the Lee house originally, a tremendous stone chimney, exposed on the exterior, forms the entire west wall of the first story; and although the stairs are not in front of the chimney, there is a space for them there. This house faces south, as did the Lee house originally.

A house of one-room plan, however, was but ill suited to the domestic usages of any except the smallest of families, living in the simplest possible manner; and additional space soon became necessary. It was obtained simply by adding another room, or unit of construction, on the opposite side of the chimney, which thus became enclosed. This change actually took place in the Lee house about 1690; so that the house then became of two-room plan, with a central chimney, in front of which was the "porch," containing the stairs to the second floor. (See B, Figure 1.) The framing of this second room is quite independent of the original hall, and, when built, was simply butted up against the original structure. It is, in fact, merely that of a single room; whereas that of the hall is the framing of a com-



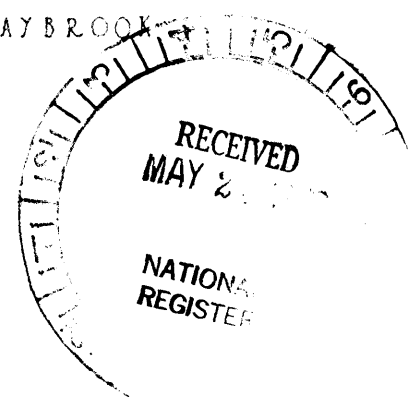
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
NORTON HOUSE
GUILFORD

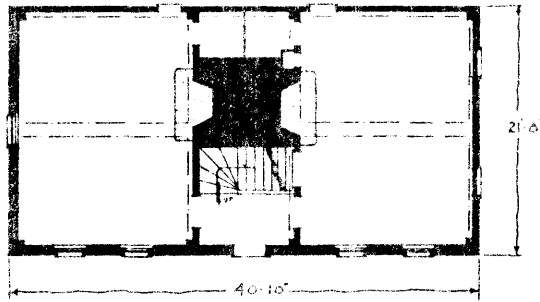
FIGURE 2.



D. V. WHELL HOUSE - SAYBROOK

FIGURE 3.



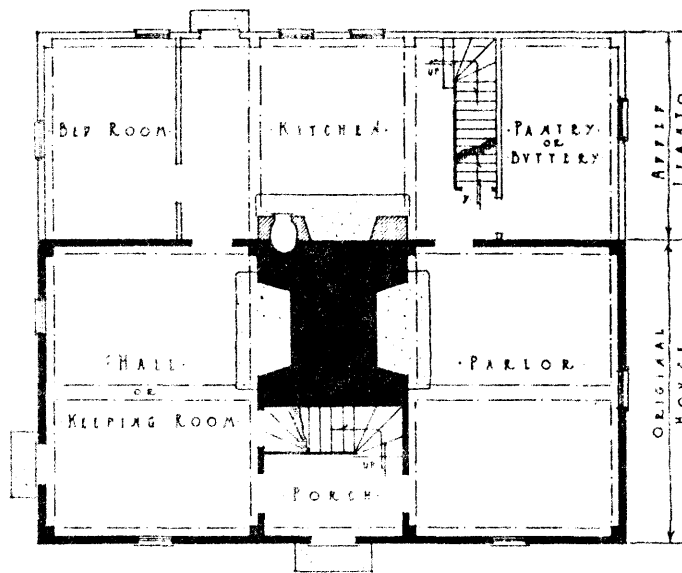


• FIRST FLOOR PLAN •
 / OLIVER WILLIAMS HOUSE - WETHERSFIELD /

FIGURE 4.

arrived at, this arrangement became firmly fixed, and the chimney stack became the center or pivotal point about which the plan revolved in its development. In both the older Bushnell and the older Williams houses a flight of steps leads down to the cellar from the hall. In each it is placed in front of the chimney and beneath the stairs to the second floor. In the Bushnell house the steps are of stone, enclosed on either side by masonry walls. Such an arrangement is always indicative of very early work. In both of these houses the cellar extends beneath only one room. The second-floor plan is, of course, identical with that

of the first or ground floor.



• TYPICAL FIRST FLOOR PLAN •
 / CENTRAL CHIMNEY TYPE /

FIGURE 5.

plete one-room house, inasmuch as it has a space for the stack, which the later room has not.

The house of two-room plan—it soon became established as a type—forms the second stage in the development of the Connecticut house plan. The older Bushnell house near Saybrook (1678-1679) and the older Williams house in Wethersfield (*circa* 1680), Figures 3 and 4, furnish us with typical examples of the period. It will be seen that in each the chimney occupies its central position behind the stair porch. Once

To meet the constantly increasing demand for more room after the two-room plan had become firmly established as a type, the simple expedient of adding a lean-to across the rear of the house was resorted to; which addition resulted in the provision of three additional rooms on the first floor and a large attic on the second. (Figure 5.) This was accomplished by continuing the main house roof in back of the ridge down to the ceiling level of the first floor. (Figure 6.) The rafters of the new lean to roof were usually a separate set from those of the main house roof, and were framed at their upper ends into the original rear

words, laid flatwise. The corners were generally framed together by means of a mortise-and-tenon joint, such as that shown in Figure 24. Another and less common form of sill jointing is that illustrated in Figure 25.

The joists of the first floor spanned the width of each room, and as a rule their ends were framed into the sills and cellar girts. In a few houses, however, of very early date, the first-floor joists were built into the foundation walls, and the house sills laid over them. Lambert states, in his *History of the Colony of New Haven*, that "The ground

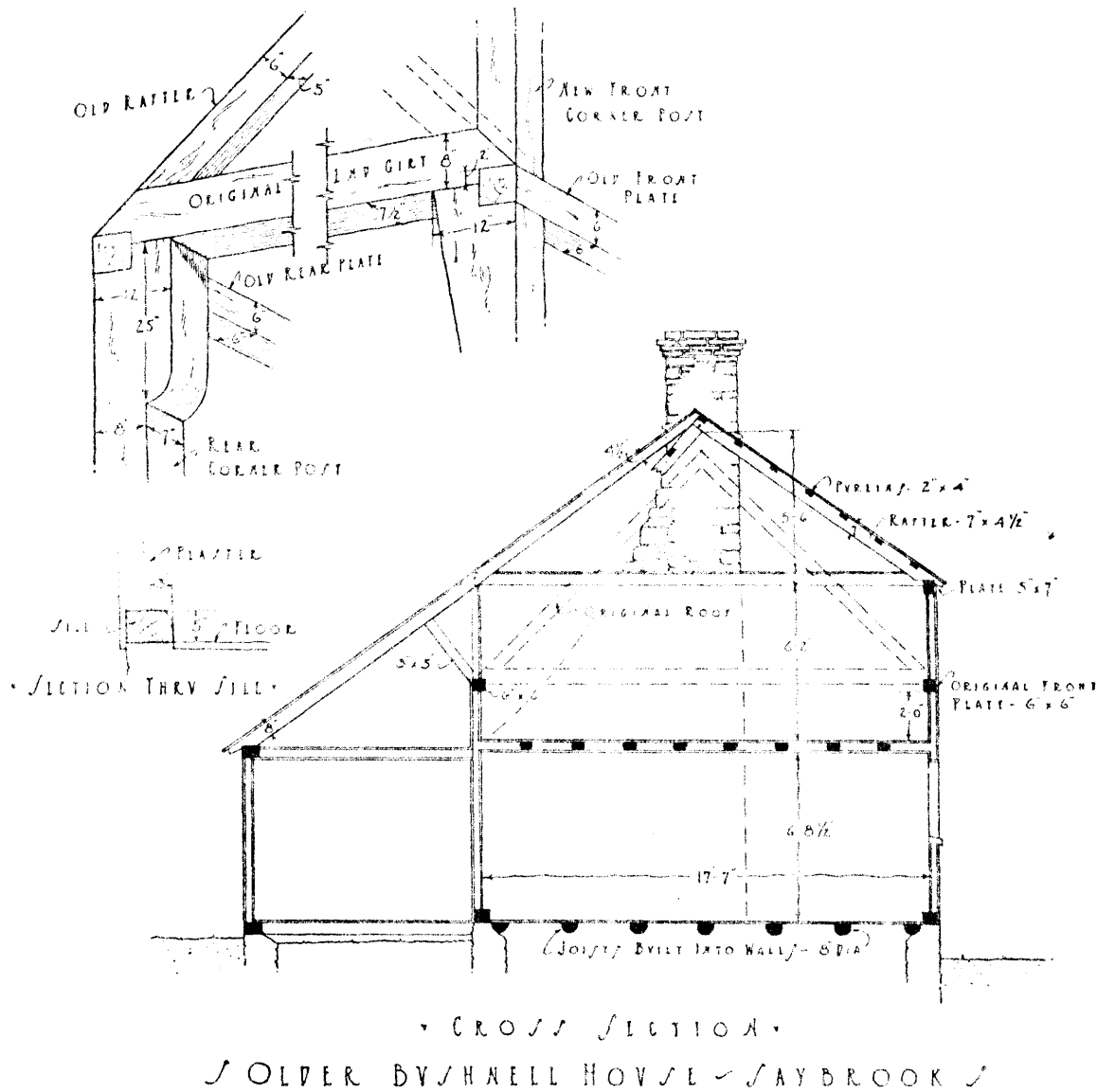


FIGURE 26.