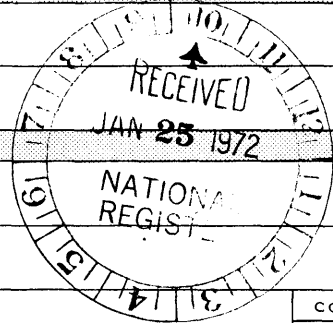


10/17, PH0010766

STATE: Connecticut	
COUNTY: New London	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER JUN 30 1972	DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)



1. NAME

COMMON:
Nathan Lester House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Vinegar Hill Road
CITY OR TOWN:
Ledyard
STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09 COUNTY: New London CODE: 011

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Historical Society hdqts.</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Town of Ledyard
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
Ledyard
STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Town Hall
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
Ledyard
STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Connecticut Historic Structures and Landmarks Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: 1966
 Federal State County Local
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Connecticut Historical Commission
STREET AND NUMBER:
51 Pratt Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Hartford
STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Connecticut	COUNTY: New London	ENTRY NUMBER JUN 30 1972	DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY			

7. DESCRIPTION

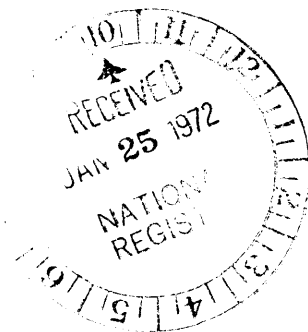
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Nathan Lester House is a typical Connecticut farmhouse with the expected 9-window facade and central chimney stack floorplan. It is described by John O. Curtis, Curator of Architecture at Old Sturbridge Village, as a "simple, sensible and perfectly unpretentious farmhouse." Mr. Curtis found the house unique for its "superb state of preservation in which it has come down to the present. Seldom does one see an ancient house surviving so essentially unaltered as to form, plan and decorative detailing."/

It is a large house with a familiar floorplan: two parlors flanking the stair hall against the chimney stack, at the rear a large kitchen with the usual commodious fireplace and brick bake oven at its left. Flanking the kitchen are two pantries, one of which may once have been a downstairs bedchamber. The size of the house permits an additional small chamber on one side balanced by a side entry on the other. At the second floor are the usual parlor chambers at the front and three rooms across the rear. The foundation is of dressed Connecticut red sandstone of generous height, which has probably contributed to the structure's fine state of preservation. The basement is of greater-than-average depth. Perhaps within a decade of the building of the original portion of the house, a two-story ell was run out at the rear. It is a spacious area and has much of the original fabric intact. The house has six fireplaces, one more than the usual number in a house of this form and plan. At least two are distinguished by handsomely dressed stone splays; all seem to be in an excellent state of preservation.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



6. SIGNIFICANCE

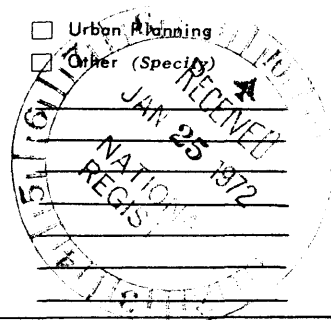
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1793

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Since the Nathan Lester House has survived nearly two hundred years of continuous use and is still in very good condition, one can call it an unusual structure. The frame, solidly built of oak, shows no signs of bulging or sagging. There is slight evidence of both dry rot and infestation by the lyctus (powder post) beetle in several areas, but is not critical, rather quite typical of the vast majority of old houses framed with oak or chestnut. In fact, Mr. Curtis found the house in far better condition than the average building of its age.

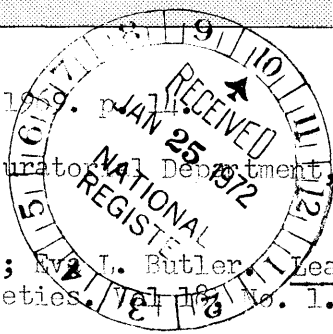
The architectural refinements in terms of decoration are minimal, as would be expected in a farmhouse of this period in a rural area. For example, the three run stair has square balusters, set on the diagonal, atop an open string embellished with characteristically Connecticut scalloped brackets. There is fielded paneling on the soffit of the stair and an intriguing localism in the form of a set-back half-way upstairs running the full width of the well (a function of the masonry construction of the chimney stack), and a simple moulded hand-rail terminating at modest square posts. The principal parlor has a wall of fine paneling, a moulded chair rail, and crown moulding room cornice only atop the paneled chimney wall. Superimposed upon the paneling of the chimney wall is an attractive and simple mantle piece in the Greek Revival style of the 1830's and 1840's. This is admittedly incorrect in the strictest analysis of stylistic progressions, but is by no means inharmonious with the paneled wall behind it. For that reason and because it has respectable age and is part of the building's history, some consideration may be due its retention. At any rate, beneath it undoubtedly is paint evidence for the width of its predecessor. Elsewhere on both floors the detail, decoration, and lack of serious or detrimental alterations are similar.

Besides being an architecturally important structure, the Lester House is also significant for its history. Included on the 110 acre property is the Ledyard Oak, an unusually large white oak measuring more than five feet in diameter. Much Indian lore is connected with the tree. It was Nathan Lester, born in 1742 on the farm here, who, in 1793, built the house. His grandfather, Peter Lester, Senior, had bought the farm, with the tree, and is probably buried in one of the dozen or so unmarked graves on the property. Nathan's only child, Hannah Gallup Lester, married Captain Adam Larrabee, hence the house is sometimes called the Larrabee House. The house remained in the family until 1908 when it was

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hartford Courant, October 27, 1969.
 Letter from John. O. Curtis, Curator, Department, Old Sturbridge Village,
 December 10, 1968.
 "The State's Oldest White Oak"; Rev. J. Butler, League Bulletin, Connecticut
 League of Historical Societies, Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 1965.



10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41° 25' 39"	72° 03' 25"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	41° 25' 39"	72° 02' 52"				
SE	41° 25' 10"	72° 02' 52"				
SW	41° 25' 10"	72° 03' 25"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 110 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Susan Babbitt, Administrative Trainee

ORGANIZATION: Connecticut Historical Commission DATE: January 20, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
54 Pratt Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hartford STATE: Connecticut CODE: 09

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: January 20, 1972

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 6/30/72

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Connecticut	
COUNTY New London	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 30 1972

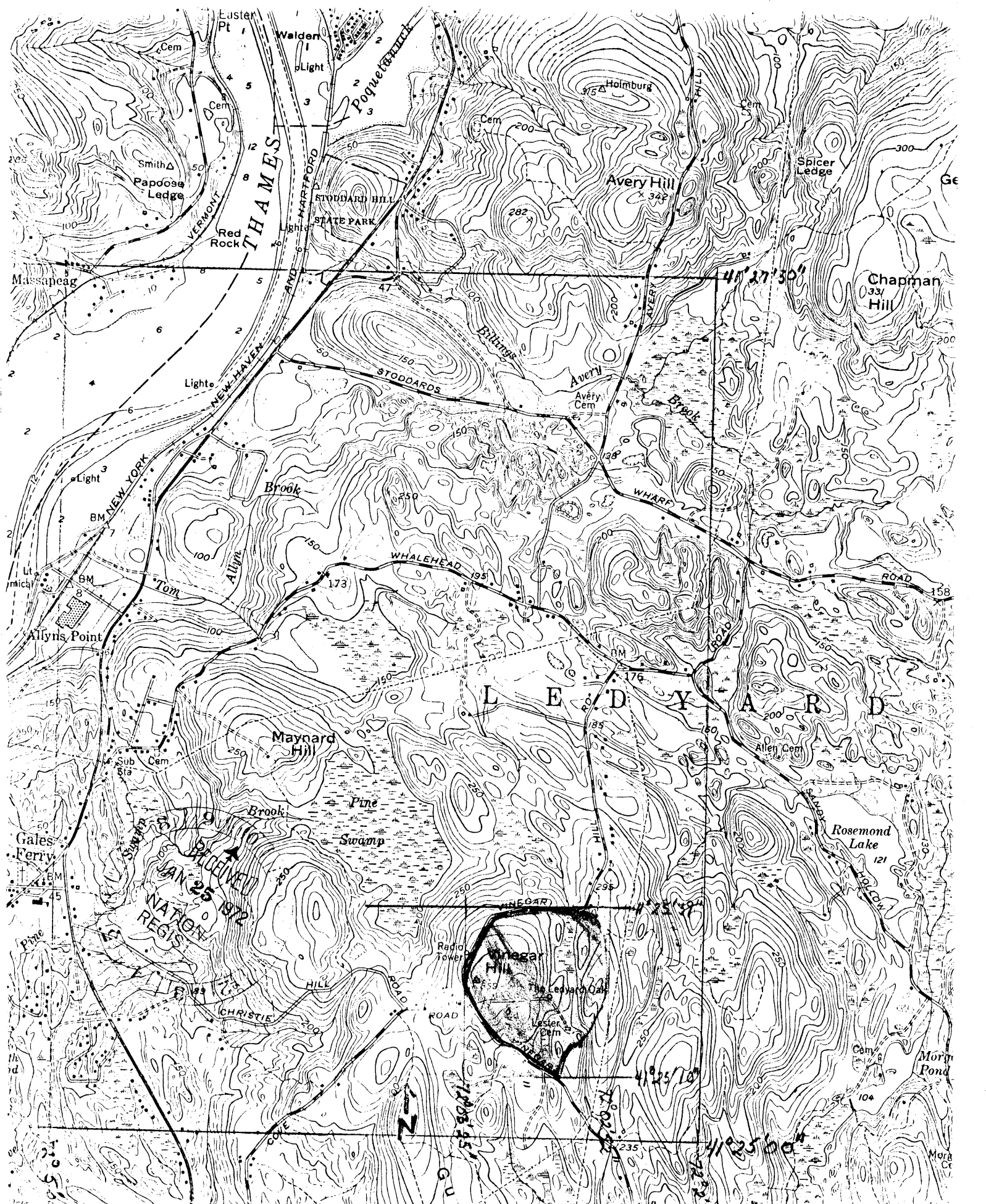
(Number all entries)

#8 Significance

bought by Dr. and Mrs. Charles B. Graves. In 1965 Elizabeth Graves Hill gave the tree, the house, and 11 acres of land to the Town of Ledyard as a memorial to her parents. The town has purchased an additional 99 acres under the Open Space Program; the total of 110 acres is now a local historic district.

The great tree is now the nucleus of a town park of 11 acres. It died about two years ago, but, according to experts, will stand for another seventy-five years. The Lester House is being restored by the Ledyard Historical Society with the help of the Connecticut Historical Commission through grants-in-aid. It will serve as the headquarters for the Historical Society and for the use of the community.





RECEIVED
JAN 25 1972
NATIONAL
REGIS

Wingard Hill
The Leeward Club
Lester Cem

41° 27' 30"

41° 25' 00"

41° 25' 00"