

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001578 Date Listed: 11/25/92

Samuel Forbes Homestead Litchfield CT
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

12/1/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Technical oversight was clarified through a phone call to the Connecticut SHPO. Criterion "A" should be deleted from the nomination and Criterion "B" added to the nomination. The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

RECEIVED

OCT 14 1992

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Samuel Forbes Homestead
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 89 Lower Road NA not for publication
city, town North Canaan vicinity East Canaan
state CT code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06024

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

John W. Shannahan October 6, 1992
Signature of certifying official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Patrick W. Andrews 11/25/92

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)COLONIAL/Postmedieval English
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls WOOD
roof ASBESTOS SHINGLES
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Samuel Forbes Homestead is a two-story, gable-roofed,¹ five-bay, central-entrance Colonial house. The main block of the house is believed to date from 1754, because of local tradition and careful family investigation.² Significant Victorian-era and Colonial Revival alterations occurred.

The house faces south close to the Blackberry River in the East Canaan section of the Town of North Canaan on a 27-acre parcel of land that long has gone with the house. (Figure 2) Sheathed in clapboards, the house has small-pane windows, twin chimneys, a long ell, and three outbuildings. It was built by Samuel Forbes (10 November 1729-27 November 1829), renowned iron worker and celebrated ironmaster.

The front elevation of the Samuel Forbes Homestead (Photograph 1) is distinguished by a small one-story, gable-roofed enclosed central front porch, original, which has narrow 10-pane windows on either side of the doorway. The windows flanking the porch are glazed in a 12-over-12 pattern; at the second floor windows are smaller, 9-over-6, with a group of three above the porch.

On the east elevation (Photograph 2), windows are 9-over-6 at first and second floors, 6-over-6 in the attic. The first-floor window toward the front has an added hood that is covered with fish-scale shingles. The first-floor window toward the rear has been replaced with a three-sided tent-roofed bay. The attic story projects over the wall plane of the first two stories and the attic gable end is treated as a pediment. The two attic windows have flat projecting caps. In the peak of the pediment is an added round-arched 1-over-1 window enclosed in a bold torus molding. (Photograph 3)

The rear elevation has two 9-over-6 windows at each floor, east of a two-story ell that is followed by an attached garage and shed. (Photograph 4) There is a shed-roofed entry in the angle of the ell. The ell has a chimney at the rear of the two-story section and 9-over-6 windows on both the east and west elevations. (Photograph 5) On the west elevation of the main block, first-floor windows have been replaced by large multi-pane sash under fish-scale hoods. (Photograph 6) On this elevation the windows in the second-floor as well as those in the attic have flat molded caps, while the pediment treatment and round-arched window in the gable peak repeat.

The homestead has been altered from time to time over the years. In an early image of the house, a drawing made sometime after Samuel Forbes death in 1827, it is a central-chimney saltbox. (Photograph 7) The front porch is in place, but without a pedimented gable. The window above the front porch appears to be large, but perhaps it looks large only because its shutters are open, while at other windows they are closed.

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The next image is undated, but because it is a photograph it presumably is from the years after the Civil War. (Photograph 8) In this picture the first-floor windows are 2-over-2, an indication of a post-Civil War date, and the central second-floor window is a 6-over-6. The big change is in the roof, now higher with two chimneys, set behind the ridge line, and with attic floor overhanging the second floor on the sides. The saltbox configuration is eliminated.

In the next photograph, of 1896, a front cross gable and full-width front porch have been added. (Photograph 9) In a companion view (Photograph 10) the attic gable end and the porch pediment are covered with fish-scale shingles. The porch railing design is enlivened with diagonal members near the posts and the posts' top brackets are quarter-round. The single window over the porch has become a group of three, but the three as a unit do not project as they do at present. The porch has a standing-seam metal roof. The date when the full-width porch and attic cross gable were removed is not known.

The interior reflects many of the changes shown by the historic exterior views. The front door opens to an area which is not a porch but simply is a part of, an extension of, the central hall. (Photograph 11) It may have been a more conventional porch prior to the introduction of the central hall. The central hall has a straight-run stair on its east wall with heavy newel and balusters consistent with the Victorian era. (Photograph 12) The four-panel door leading from the hall to the east front room is fitted with a wrought-iron Norfolk thumb latch. (Photograph 13) In the east front room the fireplace has been covered over and the finishes are either plain or new. (Photograph 14) The wide floor boards of this room are fastened by rose-headed nails with square tapered shanks.

The west front room is embellished with Colonial Revival finishes presumably dating from the early 20th century, although how early in the 20th century is unknown. The Colonial Revival features include paneling, a fireplace mantel with dentil course under the mantel shelf, beamed ceiling, and archway leading to a door to the west rear room. The fireplace consists of a stone fire box with granite surround and marble hearth. (Photograph 15) The partition between the front and rear west rooms is the partition between the front room and rear kitchen in the Colonial plan of five rooms around a central chimney, which existed when the house was built. The front room, therefore, is deeper than the rear room. The rear room, with no fireplace, still has what appears to be an original dado. (Photograph 16)

The east rear room also displays Colonial Revival finishes, including paneling and beamed ceiling. The room seems long in the lateral direction because it continues into the bay. (Photograph 17) There is a possibility that the beams in the ceiling of this and the west front room may be the original framing, exposed and finished in the Colonial Revival manner.

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The date of construction of the ell is uncertain, but it appears to have been in place by early in the 19th century. It probably was the location of the kitchen, which it still is, from the time of the central-hall alteration. Nonetheless, the brick fireplace itself does not look old, while the butterfly-shelf corner cupboard, which does appear to be old because of the shape of the shelves and the poor optics of the glass, perhaps is not in its original location. (Photograph 18)

On the second floor, the railing returns along the stair well in the central hall. Most finishes other than the railing are plain, as shown in Photograph 19 by the door surround to the east front bedroom, but the doorway to the west bedroom has band molding. The doors have four panels. The front bedrooms are plain, with Franklin stoves. (Photograph 20) The smaller back bedrooms have Colonial Revival trim. The second-floor level in the ell steps down. Optically poor glass in the second-floor windows strengthens the indication that the ell, which includes a second stairway to the first floor, was built not later than the early 19th century.

In the attic, the span of the long purlin for each roof slope is supported by two vertical timbers with braces. The rafters are heavier above the purlins than below. (Photograph 21) In the basement, what appears to be the original massive chimney base, or a portion of it, remains in place, flanked by smaller chimney bases for the two existing chimneys. (Photograph 22)

In the grounds behind the house are five outbuildings. A barn, shed, and working chicken coop are in fair condition. The barn and shed have weathered vertical siding and gable roofs covered with wood shingles, dating perhaps from late 19th/early 20th century as they have no mortise-and-tenon joints. (Photograph 23) Some of the timbers in the shed are adzed but are recycled since they are fastened with spikes. There is a further small abandoned barn and a small greenhouse formed of thick corrugated plastic.

To the west is a cemetery of approximately 47 graves, including those of Samuel Forbes, his wife, and daughter. Their names and dates are incised on a large flat stone in the middle of the burying ground. (Photograph 24) Most of the stones are schist, dating from the 19th century, but one 20th-century stone memorializes Samuel Forbes Adam (1854-1932), his father George Adam, M.D. (1812-1894), and his grandfather Samuel Forbes Adam (1784-1854). Other family names represented in the plot include Sisson, Reel, Lewis, and Warner.

¹When the photographs were taken, the roof was covered with interlocking composition shingles. Subsequently, the roof has been recovered with conventional grey/black asphalt shingles.

²Eleanor Tracy Adam used the 1754 date in a talk reported in full by the Connecticut Western News 30 September 1965. She was the wife of Dr. Forbes S. Adam, direct descendant of Samuel Forbes. Dr. William S. Adam continues to hold a significant collection of documents and memorabilia relating to Samuel Forbes and his descendants.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1754

1754-1827

Significant Dates

1754

1754-1827

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

Samuel Forbes

Architect/Builder

NA

The Samuel Forbes Homestead is a fine example of a Colonial house that has undergone a series of alterations over the years which articulate changing architectural styles. These changes themselves have taken on architectural significance. The house is significant historically because Samuel Forbes was a major figure in the iron processing industry of northwestern Connecticut at the time it supplied essential armaments to the colonial army in the Revolutionary War.

The House

In its earliest image (Photograph 7) the Samuel Forbes Homestead appears as a conventional saltbox, with the exception that its one-story front porch is unusual. Such porches tended to be a mid-17th-century phenomenon, which soon disappeared. Probably the best known two-story front porch in Connecticut architectural history was that of the house of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, leader of the group that founded Hartford, c. 1636. Cummings in his discussion of porches finds that they appeared typically as features of homes of the more affluent settlers, sometimes as additions.¹ While pointing out that such porches usually were two-story, he does picture a one-story porch similar to that of the Forbes house.² The construction of a porch as late as mid 18th century can be explained perhaps as a factor of the country location, but the late date does tend to suggest that it was original rather than an addition.³

In the first important change to the house, the central chimney was replaced by twin chimneys, a central hall introduced, and the saltbox rear-roof slope eliminated. (Photograph 8) This basic change in layout, replacing the plan of five rooms around a central chimney with two rooms on either side of a central hall, was not uncommon. As the Georgian style succeeded the Colonial, such a program of alterations modernized an old house. Date of the alterations to the Forbes Homestead is unknown; it may well have occurred long before the picture was taken. Treatment of the gable ends as pediments is sensitive to the influence of the Federal or Greek Revival styles, suggesting a date of early 19th century.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society
Collections of Dr. William F. Adam

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 26.7

UTM References

A	1 8	6 3 9 4 8 0	4 6 5 2 3 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	6 3 8 8 2 0	4 6 5 2 4 6 0

B	1 8	6 3 9 3 6 0	4 6 5 2 1 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 8	6 3 8 8 5 0	4 6 5 2 5 2 0

E 18/639230/4652340 F 18/639310/4652470

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the North Canaan Land Records at Volume 31, Page 536.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes land that has been associated with the house since the turn of the 20th century.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
organization Architectural Historian date June 1992
street & number 33 Sunrise Hill Drive telephone 203 521-2518
city or town West Hartford state CT zip code 06107

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Further extensive changes took place later in the 19th century in reflection of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The heavy newel and railing of the stair (Photograph 12) are consistent with the Victorian era. The round-arched gable-peak windows with their heavy moldings may be late Italianate, while the fish-scale shingles of the front cross gables and first-floor side-elevation window hoods are Queen Anne.

The wide front porch appears in the 1896 photograph (Photograph 9), and may, therefore, precede the Colonial Revival large side-elevation windows with small panes, and interior dark wood finishes of the first floor. These features may date from c. World War I.

The presence of the original front porch and the documented record of the parade of architectural styles from Colonial Saltbox through Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival in a single structure establish the architectural significance of the Samuel Forbes Homestead. The outbuildings and cemetery complete the site, giving authenticity to the historic ambience.

The Man

Samuel Forbes was born 10 November 1729 in Simsbury, Connecticut, the son of John Forbes, a blacksmith, who moved his family to Canaan in the early 1740s. Samuel became a blacksmith with his father; together they built and operated a forge on the Blackberry River near the location where Samuel erected his house in 1754, the year in which he married Lucy Peirce [sic] (1735-7 October 1813).

Iron for the Forbes forge was brought by horseback from Salisbury. In 1762 Samuel and his brother Elisha in partnership with Ethan Allen bought a forge at Lakeville, in Salisbury, and converted it to a blast furnace, which they sold after a year or two. This property was seized in 1776 by the Connecticut Council of Safety, at the urging of Governor Trumbull, for the purpose of casting cannon. Samuel Forbes, commissioned ironmaster, returned to the furnace he knew. The facility, consisting of blast furnace and puddling works (foundry), operated for about three years producing cannon, at great cost, for Generals George Washington, Phillip Schuyler, and Israel Putnam as well Connecticut's militia and privateers. Because of his work at Lakeville, Samuel Forbes became known as the "Iron Prince."⁴ Since 75% of all American cannon were cast at Salisbury,⁵ Samuel Forbes contribution to the success of the Revolutionary War was substantial.

Samuel and Lucy Forbes' only child, Abigail (19 June 1755-30 July 1836), married John Adam, Jr., of Taunton, Massachusetts, who came to Canaan and joined in the business, bringing expertise in the development of slitting mills for nail stock. Forbes & Adam were famous for their production of heavy iron forgings, especially ship anchors, but also steamboat irons, augurs for boring cannon, bellows pipe, blacksmiths' raw material, chains, grappling irons, hoops and bands, plow plates, salt-evaporation pans, and saws. In 1799 the firm delivered parts to Eli

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Whitney for the manufacture of muskets. In addition to the forge and puddling works, it operated a store, which was across the river from the Homestead. In his busy life Samuel also was an investor in woodland, a cidemill, coal house, and water privileges and in the shares of banks and turnpikes. He served in the Connecticut General Assembly, 1766-1802.

During the many years Samuel Forbes lived in the Homestead before his death at age 98 on 27 November 1829, he entertained notable visitors, including Benedict Arnold, who tarried briefly while recovering from a wound received in battle, and Jonathan Edwards, who stayed several months.

Samuel Forbes Adam, grandson of Samuel Forbes, built a blast furnace at the lowest of three dams near the Homestead in 1832. In association with the partnership of Barnum & Richardson it operated until c. 1880.

A granddaughter of Samuel Forbes married into the Beckley family. John Adam Beckley, Jr., great-grandson of Samuel Forbes, established the Beckley blast furnace in 1837 at the uppermost of the three dams on the Blackberry River near the Homestead. The Beckley Furnace was listed in the National Register of Historic Places 14 February 1978.

Barnum & Richardson built the last of the blast furnaces on this section of the Blackberry River in 1872, completing the group of eight built over time within an eight-mile radius of Salisbury.

Descendants of Samuel Forbes in the Adam family continued to own and occupy the Homestead until 1955, when the flood of that year caused great and discouraging damage to the property. It then was vacant until purchased in 1960 by the present owner and resident.

Samuel Forbes followed his father into the iron-processing business and in turn was followed by his descendants. By his 98-year lifetime in the industry, Samuel earned the position of chief among five generations of Forbes-family ironworkers. The history of the iron manufacturing industry in northwestern Connecticut is inextricably entwined with the history of Samuel Forbes and his descendants.

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¹Abbott Lowell Cummings, The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1929), pp. 35-39. J. Frederick Kelly in his Early American Domestic Architecture of Connecticut (New Haven: 1924) does not discuss porches.

²Cummings, Fig. 276, the 17th-century Balch House, Beverly, Massachusetts.

³A nearly identical front porch exists on a house nearby in North Canaan, the Lawrence Tavern (1751) on Elm Street (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 10 March 1983). The presence of two examples in the neighborhood suggests a common builder.

⁴Adam Ward Rome, Connecticut's Cannon: The Salisbury Furnace in the American Revolution (Hartford: The American Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1977), p. 12.

⁵Rome, p. 9.

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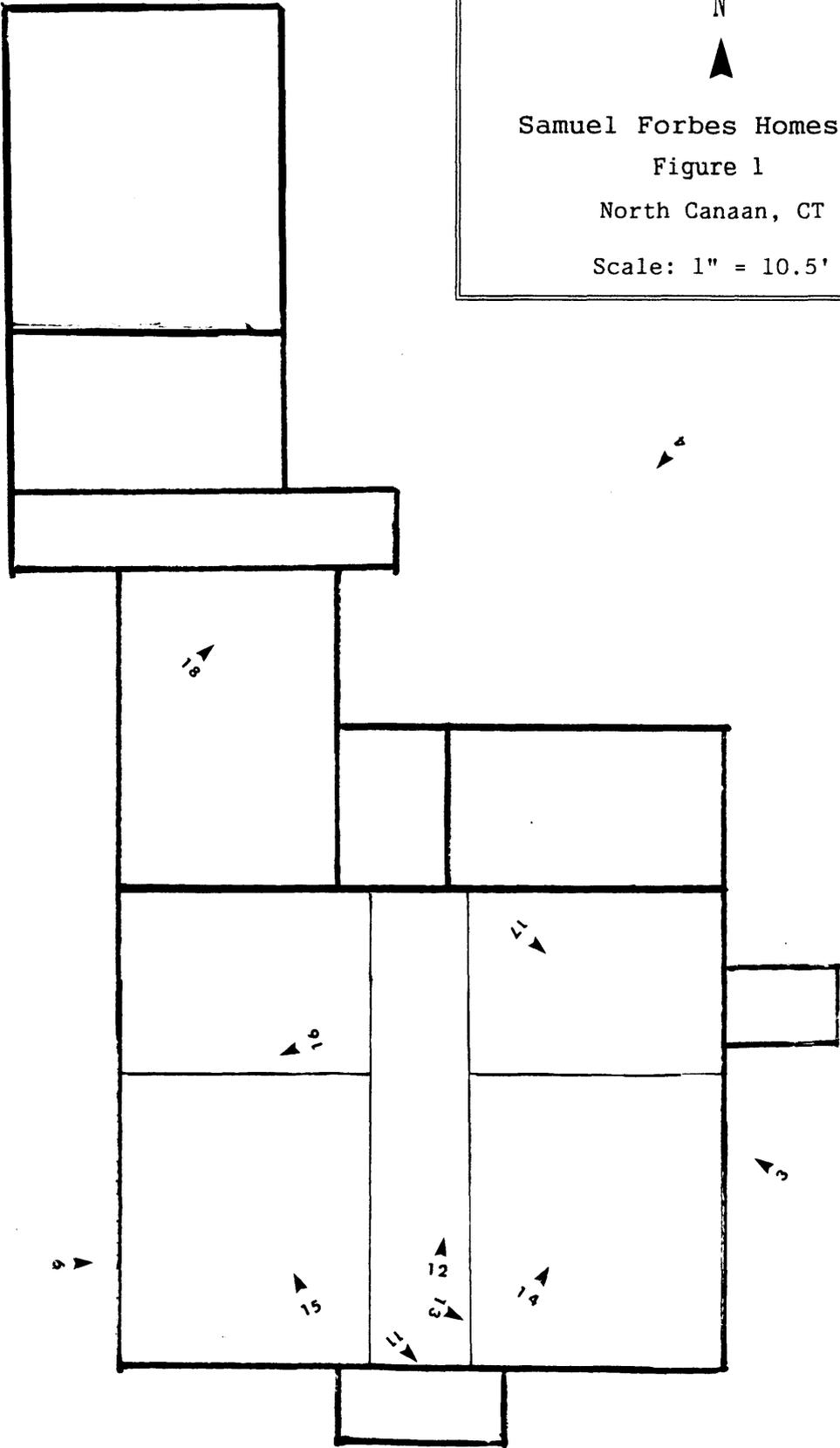
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Bibliography

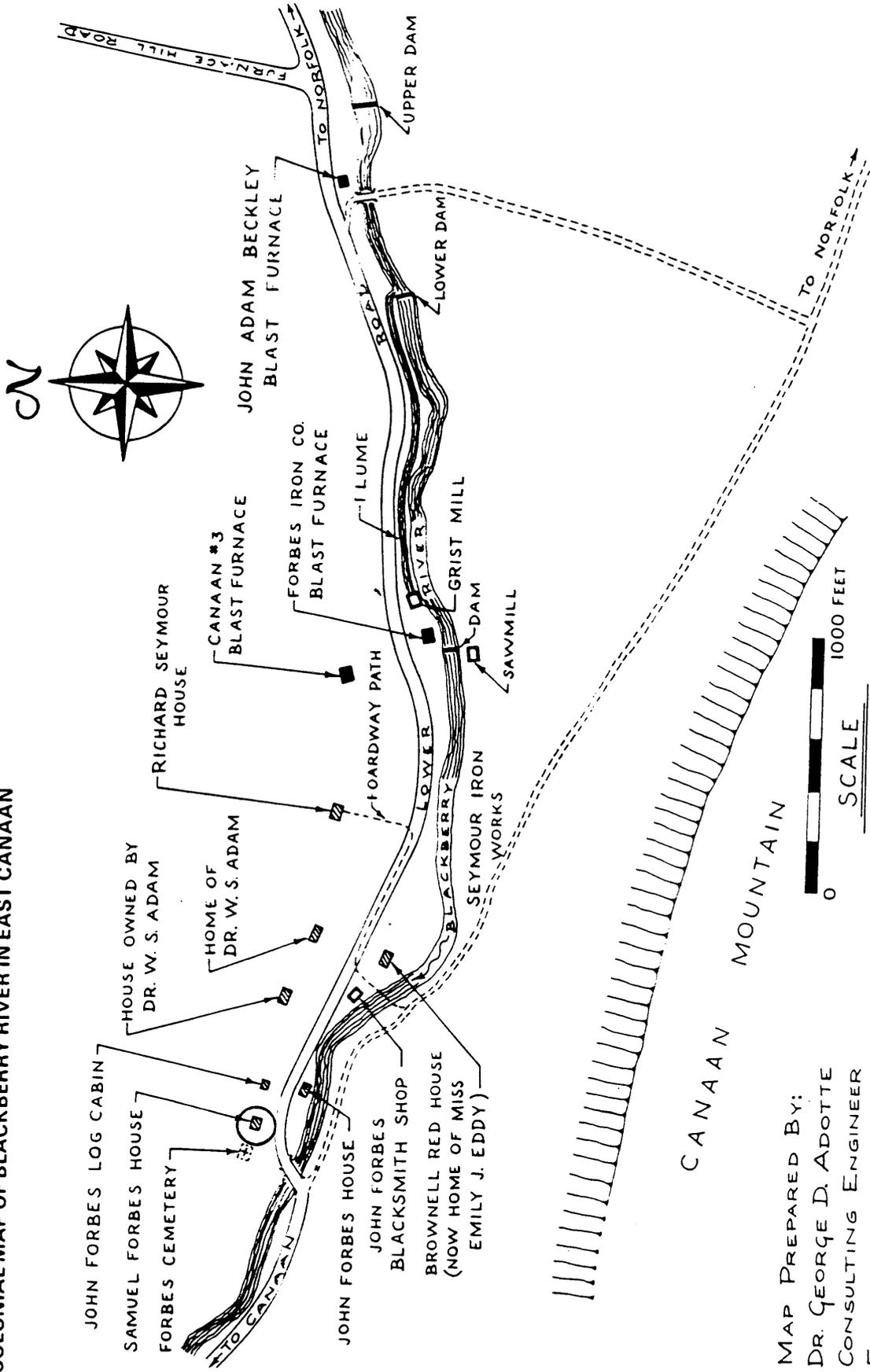
- Adam, Eleanor Tracy. Talk, "Samuel Forbes - Iron Master, 1729-1827," printed in Connecticut Western News, 30 September 1965.
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- Cummings, Abbott Lowell. The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725. Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1929.
- Felton, Harold W. Canaan. Falls Village: Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society, 1990.
- Howell, Kenneth T., and Carlson, Einar W. Men of Iron, Forbes & Adam. 1980.
- Rome, Adam Ward. Connecticut's Cannon: The Salisbury Furnace in the American Revolution. Hartford: The American Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1977.
- Wall Map of Canaan. Philadelphia: Richard Clark, 1853.

N
▲
Samuel Forbes Homestead
Figure 1
North Canaan, CT
Scale: 1" = 10.5'



F

COLONIAL MAP OF BLACKBERRY RIVER IN EAST CANAAN



MAP PREPARED BY:
 DR. GEORGE D. ADOTTE
 CONSULTING ENGINEER
 EAST CANAAN, CONN.

Samuel Forbes Homestead
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 Figure 2

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Photographs were taken 30 April 1992 by David F. Ransom. Photographs 7-10 are courtesy of the Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society, Inc. Negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Photograph 1 View north	Photograph 12 Central hall View northeast	Photograph 21 Attic View southwest
Photograph 2 View northwest	Photograph 13 Latch of door between central hall and east front room View southeast	Photograph 22 Basement View northeast
Photograph 3 East gable peak View west	Photograph 14 First floor, east front room View northeast	Photograph 21 Attic View southwest
Photograph 4 View southwest	Photograph 15 First floor, west front room View northwest	Photograph 22 Basement View northeast
Photograph 5 View southeast	Photograph 16 First floor, west rear room View southwest	Photograph 23 Barn and shed View north
Photograph 6 West elevation South window View east	Photograph 17 First floor, east rear room View southeast	Photograph 24 Burying ground View southeast
Photograph 7 Drawing from 1853 wall map	Photograph 18 Kitchen ell View northeast	
Photograph 8 Historic Photograph c. Civil War	Photograph 19 Second-floor hall View south	
Photograph 9 Historic Photograph 1896	Photograph 20 Southwest bedroom View northwest	
Photograph 10 Historic Photograph c. 1896		
Photograph 11 Front of central hall View southeast		