CITY, TOWN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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SURVEY RECORDS	11				



_EXCELLENT

X_GOOD

__FAIR

CONDITION

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__UNEXPOSED

__DETERIORATED __UNALTERED

CHECK ONE

__UNALTERED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The three-story, gable-roofed, clapboard house that stands north of the Green in Bethlehem, Connecticut was the home during the second half of the 18th century of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Bellamy, preacher, author, and educator. The house is located at the southern tip of a farm of approximately 104 acres (see U.S.G.S. map) that was purchased by Bellamy in 1741. The facade of the house is dominated by a Palladian pavilion, while on the interior original fireplaces, panelling, and other details are carefully preserved.

The three-story front block of the house, facing south, is approximately 33 feet square, with a central chimney off center to the west (see sketch). There is a two-story wing to the rear at the northeast corner of this block, 20 feet wide and 28 feet long. The wing is thought to have been built first, and the main block a few years later. There is a second chimney in the common wall between the wing and the main block (Photograph 1). Echind the wing, kitchen and service facilities have been built and re-built from time to time, the present arrangement dating from the first quarter of the 20th century. There is a wide porch along the east side of the wing, that was added during the 20th century, with columns and roof balustrade.

The chief decorative element of the house is the shallow Palladian pavilion (Photograph 2) that occupies the eastern half of the facade. The first story of the pavilion is a screen of four fluted Ionic columns with entablature of architrave, freize, dentil course and crown molding. The screen protects the front door, which is flanked by narrow windows. At the second story a round-headed window over a short balustrade again is flanked by narrow windows, and four Ionic pilasters are positioned above the first story columns. The pediment of the pavilion is deeply recessed and its cornices are heavily embellished with modillion blocks and moldings.

The western half of the facade is filled by two 12-over-12 windows at each floor. At the first floor the windows have flat caps that are extensions of the screen's cornice, literally connected in the case of the window closest to the screen. The base of the pediment is extended across the eaves over the second floor windows, with slight returns at the corners over rusticated quoins. The high, wood-shingled roof that rises well above the pediment is broken by two gabled dormers that have pediments and cornices modelled after the pavilion.

The east elevation has two windows, one over the other, toward the front that are similar to those on the facade. The two windows toward the back were altered in the 19th century to a two-story, three-sided bay with cornices at first and second story levels. There is a pair of windows at the third floor surmounted by a cornice similar to that used over the front windows. A small attic window is in the peak of the gable. The roof projects beyond the gable end and its two slopes are treated as raking cornices with the modillion blocks and moldings of the front pavilion's cornices.

The west elevation has two windows toward the front, one above the other, corresponding to those on the east. A porch has been added on the

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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

Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET

Existing

Surveys

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE]

Federal Ariters Project, Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut 1930's State

Connecticut State Library

Hartford

Connecticut

State Register of Historic Places

Connecticut Historical Commission

Hartford

State

Connecticut

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

west side, toward the front, and behind the porch there is a two-story addition that has a two-story, three-sided bay on its west wall (Photograph 3).

The grounds surrounding the house are landscaped with lawns in front and to the east of the house, and a garden to the west. In the back, two rows of two-story, gable-roofed barns face one another (Photograph 4). The west row is made up of two buildings with the southern one apparently the older as its walls are narrow vertical boards, while the northern unit has clapboards. The barn on the east is a single building, the newest of the three, and is constructed of wide vertical boards. Ground floor spaces in the barns now are used for a wood shed and garage, and in the past were used for a carriage house and a stable for horses and cows. In the northern section of the west row there are two rooms finished off with plaster that probably at one time were used as living quarters. The second floors of the barns are available for storage, but now are largely empty. Fehind the barns there is a chicken house, and at one time a large hay barn stood near the chicken house. In recent decades the hay barn, deteriorated beyond repair, was taken down. There is a small structure west of the farm buildings that is thought to have been Dr. Bellamy's study, or perhaps the law office of his son, David. Its chief architectural feature is a columned portico added in the 20th century.

The acreage has been actively farmed over the centuries and continues to be farmed in part at the present. A stone wall extends around the entire perimeter of the property (and across the land at a point behind the barns) except for the southerntip, i.e., the land around the house, where there is a white, wood, picket fence. All of the land is included in the nomination because it has been assciated with the house ever since it was built.

On the interior the main block has four rooms on both the first and second floors, in the same floor plan. The front door leads to a spacious square hall. The doorways leading from the hall to the other front room (the drawing room) and to the room back of the hall (a sitting room) have eared architraves, and the drawing room has a ceiling cornice with dentil course. The drawing room has a fireplace mantel on its north wall that is elaborate and attenuated in the manner of Robert Adam, the lothcentury English architect. The fireplace opening is flanked by fluted pilasters with molded capitals that support an entablature in which the architrave is embellished with swags and the freize with triglyphs. The mantel shelf, molded and with dentil course, breaks out over the pilasters. to the left of the fireplace opens into the library, the largest room, where the fireplace is on the south wall, on the other side of the chimney from the drawing room fireplace. The library fireplace (Photograph 5) is simpler than that in the drawing room with reeded pilasters, pulvinated freize, and narrow molded shelf. The overmantel is panelled to the ceiling, and extends

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Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

asymmetrically on the left of the fireplace. Similar raised panelling forms a dado on the east and north walls of the room, the westwall having been moved out for the western extension and bay. Two more fireplaces are in the chimney between the sitting room and the wing. Host of the wing is now the dining room, with a ceiling lower than those in the main block, and a pantry leading to the kitchen and service quarters. The dining room has cased and beaded posts at its southern end.

The stairway to the second floor ascends in the southeast corner of the hall, just inside the front door (Photograph 6). There are four risers to the east to a square landing, and then a straight run to the north to the second floor. The handrail is ramped and terminates in a volute supported by square balusters on the extended first tread. On the other steps there are two balusters per tread, and the step ends have whale's tail moldings. The main run of the stairs passes immediately in front of a window in the east wall. A closed string is used in front of the window.

The second floor plan being the same as the first, there is a large, airy hall at the top of the stairs, in front of the Palladian window. There are three bedrooms in the main block, and two more in the wing, the floor level there being two steps below that in the front of the nouse. The third floor, originally one large room, has been divided into two with a narrow hall. The roof framing is visible in the attic above. It is a system of ten principal rafters joined at the peak with mortise and tenon, covered with longitudinal boards, and without purlins, collar beams, or braces. The rafters continue down to the level of the third story floor, the attic plate serving as a single giant purlin in each slope. The rafters are scooped out at this point (Photograph 7). The roof framing of the wing is of the same character employing nine principal rafters. At the junction where the roof of the wing is framed into the roof of the principal block there is a square foo or two of the rear slope of the roof of the main block that has no shingle nails or nail holes in the boards, indicating that it was never shingled, i.e. never was exposed to the weather, and therefore not in existence before the wing. On the contrary, this condition is evidence that the wing either predates the main block or was built at the same time.

There is a full cellar under the main block and wing with fieldstone walls. The bases of the two chimneys are stone about seven feet square.

1. Charles Prindle's account book at the Connecticut Historical Society has an entry dated October 1, 1802 reading: to David Bellame, Dr., for framing his barn, 1-18.0. The entry may relate to the oldest of these three barns.

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	[™] _RELIGION
_1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
_1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
×1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
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		INVENTION		
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SPECIFIC DATES C. 1760

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Bellamy was a leading preacher, author, and educator in New England in the second half of the 18th century (Criterion E). He conducted a theology school in his house that was the first in the nation (Criterion A). The house itself is a well preserved example of heavy postend-beam, mortise-and-tenon Colonial construction with an exquisitely designed Georgian frontispiece and accompanying trim (Criterion C).

The land area now known as the Fown of Bethlehem was purchased from the Indians in 1710 by the Fown of Goodbury, and was known as the North Purchase. It was not settled until 1734. Bellamy first preached in the North Purchase in 1738, became the duly appointed first minister in 1739/1740, and served in that capacity for the rest of his life until he died in 1790. The North Furchase was incorporated as the separate Fown of Bethlehem in 1787.

tended Tale College, Class of 1735, studied theology with Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts, thereby beginning a lifetime friendship, and was licensed to preach in 1737. Then bellamy came to the North Purchase he received land from the proprietors pursuant to the usual custom of providing land for the church and the minister and in addition received ownership in other parcels as sifts.

Bellamy joined Edwards in espousing the cause of the Great Awakening, a movement within the Congregational Church that was an effort, the final effort, to re-establish the precepts of basic Furitanism as known in the carly 17th century. Bellamy, an excellent speaker, was much in demand. With the concurrence of his congregation, who agreed to his extensive travels, he spoke 458 times throughout Connecticut in a two-year period in 1740's. The evangelical fervor of the Great Awakening brought fanatical extremes of which Bellamy disapproved, causing him to disassociate himself from the movement and to give up his itinerant, evangelical preaching.

At this time Bellamy already was engaged in writing. During his career he published some 22 books, that are listed by Anderson. Ferhaps the most influential was Frue Teligion Delineated of 1750 in which he argued for a humane theory of atomement which made it universal instead of being limited to the elect. In oxforsive collection of a Hamy's papers and correspondence for many years was maintained in the library of the Lartford Theological Seminary, now relevant to Lacry University, Atlanta, Toomria.

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Joseph Bellamy House Pethlehem, JT

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Bellamy began bringing theological students into his home as early as 1740 but it was in the 1750's, after the publication of True Religion Delineated established his importance in the field, that aspiring theologians began to seek him but in significant numbers. A list of 42 students known to have studied with him is given by Anderson. Bellamy's teaching included a question and answer methodology in which he encouraged original thinking, and he recommended to his students that they read not only the orthodox writers but also the keenest opponents of Christianity. By tradition, the big third floor room running the length of the house served as a dormitory for the students. Considering the presence of as many as half a dozen students, the operation of the farm, and the conduct of the minister's normal duties, the Bellamy household was a busy place.

Anderson in his definitive study, discussed below, credits Bellamy with the first theological school in the country. 6 He makes the distinction that whereas Jonathan Edwards and others had earlier taken in single scholar for study, Bellamy was the first to have several students at one time who followed a course of study that proceeded according to a plan.

Bellamy's reputation spread beyond the borders of Connecticut. He was called by the First Presbyterian Church of New York City, in 1754, but Lellamy did not accept the call. One reason that he declined, as he quite candidly said at the time, was that it would have been costly for him to leave the North Purchase. The real estate given to him when he became the minister had been deeded on the condition that he continue to perform the ministerial duties. If he had gone to New York he would have lost valuable real estate.

A further indication of his widespread reputation was the fact that he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1768.

A thorough analysis and evaluation of Bellamy and his career were undertaken by Glenn Paul Anderson in his doctoral dissertation entitled <u>Joseph Eellamy (1719-1790)</u>: The Man and His Work, Boston University Graduate School, 1971. Anderson summarizes his evaluation of the man by saying, "Bellamy certainly did not measure up to his teacher, Jonathan Edwards, nor did he perfect a system of divinity as did his friend, Samuel Hopkins, or his student, Jonathan Edwards, the Younger. But an able teacher he was, and better preacher...'few were equal to him in the Desk.' This made him an important teacher in the 'schools of the prophets.'"

Then Bellamy died he owned considerable real estate not only in Bethlehem but also in Minchester, a town to the north. His estate was in-

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ventoried at £ 1763. At the time of his death his salary had risen to £ 80 per year. The value of his estate was 22 times his salary.

Despite the fact that he already owned several pieces of land, Bellamy bought the plot on which his house stands in 1741 (Joodbury Land Records 61/161), but according to tradition did not start to build for 13 years. where he lived from 1738 to 1754 is not documented, although another house in Bethlehem is thought locally to have been one of his residences. When he did start to build, the tradition is that Bellamy constructed first what is now the wing, and lived there for perhaps six years until the main block was built. Such a procedure was not uncommon, as noted by J. Frederick Kelly, the leading authority on Connecticut's Colonial architecture. 11 There are difficulties with this tradition, however, as the wing is only one room deep -- cramped quarters for a growing family. Moreover, there is no central chimney and no indication in the framing or in the cellar that there ever was a central chimney. Thus, the question arises, if the wing was a home for several years how was it heated and how was food prepared? The stack in the common wall between the wing and the main block does not have the appearance of once having been an end chimney. As a further complication, none of the fireplaces in the two existing stacks has an oven, giving rise to the question of where was the cooking done after both the main block and the wing were in existence? One possible explanation of these circumstances is that the original wing was thoroughly altered during the 19th century with the advent of the coal kitchen range, and the domestic arrangements both for when a wing existed alone and for later when the main block had been built simply are unknown.

An equally fascinating line of inquiry relates to the handsome Palladian frontispiece. Who was the architect or builder responsible for it? Was it part of the house when originally constructed, or was it added? Seven such frontispieces, have been identified in Connecticut, all dating from the late 18th century. Their common features are that they are shallow, projecting pavilions with a screen of four, one-story Ionic columns, under a Palladian window with short balustrade, and Ionic pilasters, and crowned by a recessed pediment embellished with moldings and modillion blocks. Usually the cornice of the screen extends to become the lintels of the flanking windows. Only one architect, William Sprats (1756-1810), has been established by documentation to have designed such frontispieces. William L. Warren has demonstrated that Sprats designed the frontispieces for the Julius Deming House and Sheldon's Tavern in Litchfield, and probably for the Solomon Cowles House in Farmington. There is no reason to think that Sprats designed all the others, or that he did not. David Hoadley (1774-1838) and Eertimeus Fabrique (1751-1829), both talented architects, were active in the area at this time. It may be conjectured that one

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could have copied from another, or that all used the same plate (as yet unidentified) in a pattern book. It is to be hoped that future research will resolve some of these questions.

One analysis, or conjecture, of the Fellamy House holds that it was built, c. 1760, as a normal four-bay Colonial structure, with the doorway in the second bay from the east. Then, at the time Joseph Hellamy died in 1790 and his lawyer son, David, inherited the property, Sprats was called in from nearby Litchfield, where he lived from 1782 to 1797 to add fashionable improvements that included the frontispiece, the window and eaves cornices, the interior cornices, the eared architraves of the hall doorways, and the Adamesque mantel in the drawing room. Local tradition that comes down with the house does not include an, such important incident of alterations. The unique aspect of the Fellamy House is that the pavilion is off center, occupying the right half of the facade. In all other cases the pavilion is a central element. This observation may be used to support the argument that if the frontispiece were original to the Fellamy House, the house would have been so designed that the pavilion was centrally positioned, as in all other examples.

The absence of solutions to these problems in no way detracts from the character and significance of this handsome house and grounds. The house, outbuildings, and acreage are all artifacts closely related to the career of an important lôth century preacher, author, and educator whose work strongly influenced the thinking of his times. The sturdy construction and elaborate embellishment of the house support its significance in the history of American architecture.

The Hellamy family owned the property for more than 100 years, into the third quarter of the 19th century. Then, after changing hands several times in the space of a few years, it was held by a single owner to 1913. The present owner has been a resident of the house since 1913.

1. See Woodbury Land Records 6/155, 7/16, etc. These transactions are literally noted in the index to the land records as gifts. Another minister who had extensive land holdings was Thomas Hooker of Hartford, who owned 1/4 parcels. See volume in the Hartford Land Records entitled "Distribution 1639-1680," page 327.

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Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

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- 2. Materbury Republican, July 22, 1951, Magazine Section.
- 3. Anderson, p. 663ff.
- 4. Anderson, p. 402ff.
- 5. N.C.A.B., v. 7, p. 78.
- 6. Anderson, p. 371.
- 7. Anderson, p. 465.
- 8. Samuel Hopkins was a theological leader in Rhode Island. Edwards, Hopkins and Bellamy constituted a triumvirate that dominated New England theology in the third quarter of the 18th century.
 - 9. Anderson, p. 273.
- 10. Caroline Ferriday has studied the land record thoroughly, and has constructed a map of the North Purchase, c. 1750, showing the several owners and their properties. She has carefully established that the 61/161 transaction relates to the land where the house stands. Originally, the parcel was rectangular; over the years it has become tapered in shape, with the narrow tip at the south. (Caroline Ferriday is the owner of the house.)
 - 11. Kelly, p. 17.
- 12. A 1913 snapshot shows a small central brick chimney in the wing, off center to the north. The chimney has the appearance of being suitable for the flue of a stove.
- 13. Connecticut houses with pavilions similar to that of the Joseph Bellamy House, tnetative listing:
 - Elijah Boardman House, 1793, 51 Main Street, New Milford (Photograph 8). Solomon Cowles Mouse, Main Street, Parmington (Photograph 9).

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Julius Deming House, 1794, Borth Street, Litchfield (Photograph 10).

Moore House, 1762?, west side of Southbury-Woodbury Road, 800 feet south of intersection of Routes 6 and 67, Moodbury (Picture, Mason, page 202).

Scoville House, c. 1795, On the Green on site of Hotel Elton, Materbury (Photograph at Litchfield Historical Society). Demolished.

Sheldon's Tavern, 1790, North Ltreet, Litchfield (Photograph 11).

Stony Erock, no date, Church Street opposite Houte 67, Hoxbury (Picture, Mason, page 250).

- 14. Marren's articles on Oprats appear in <u>Old-Time New England</u>, v. 44, Winter, 1954, and v. 45, Fall 1955, and in the <u>Jonnecticut Antiquarian</u>, v. 9, December 1957.
- 15. Extensive study of the Hellamy correspondence and other papers thus far has failed to turn up any reference to construction of the house, or alterations to it. One item of Hellamy's that is not at hand is a diary. It is thought that should a diary come to hand it might well contain reference to the house, but so far the the archives have not been helpful in regard to the early history of the mass.
- 16. Young men studied for the ministry at institutions such as Yale and Harvard, but these institutions were not devoted excludively to the study of theology.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DAT			
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NAME / TITLE			
David D. Ransom			
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Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

Geograph.

CONTINUATION SHEET Data

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UTM References

- A 18/649560/4612140
- Б 18/649200/4611100
- 0 18/649090/4611090
- D 18/649060/4611200 E 18/648960/4611290
- F 18/648890/4612110
- G 18/649100/4612110
- H 18/648210/4612020
- I 18/649210/4612020
- J 18/649190/4612130 K 18/649300/4612100

Joseph Bellamy House Bethlehem, CT

Scale: 1" = 15'



Barns

