

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received MAR 31 1982

date entered APR 29 1982

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

1. Name

historic NATHANIEL HOLCOMB III HOUSE

and/or common ISAAC PORTER HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 45 Bushy Hill Road N/A not for publication

city, town Granby N/A vicinity of 6th congressional district

state Connecticut code 09 county Hartford code 003

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

4. Owner of Property

name Eugene and Gemma Baker

street & number 45 Bushy Hill Road

city, town Granby N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Granby Town Clerk

street & number North Granby Road

city, town Granby state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes nodate 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

(continued)

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

Overview

The Nathaniel Holcomb III House, c. 1720, is a 2½ story, gable-roofed, five-bay, frame house sided with clapboards, on stone foundations with stone central chimney and central doorway, and ell to the rear (Photograph 1).^{*} The house faces east on a slight rise, set back about 30 feet from Bushy Hill Road in the west central section of the Town of Granby, Connecticut.

The two acres on the east end of the five acre parcel on which the house presently sits (see plot plan) were part of the original six acres granted by the Town of Simsbury to Nathaniel Holcomb III in 1719/20.¹ The other three acres are part of additional land obtained by Holcomb from the town commons in the 1720's.² The bulk of Holcomb's original holdings are now in other hands, but these five acres, being cleared and well cared for, are sufficient to provide a pastoral setting consistent with the antiquity of the house.

The neighborhood is rural residential. Crooked Brook, as it is referred to in the earliest deeds to the property, is south of the house, and open or lightly wooded fields lie behind it and across the street. Other structures along Bushy Hill Road, three of which are visible from the Nathaniel Holcomb III House, are a mixture of contemporary construction and old farm houses.

Exterior

The facade is five bays wide. On the first floor the windows have plain casings 3½"-4" wide; the second floor casings are only 2" wide on the sides. The rectangular 8-over-12 sash on the first floor are replacements taken from another old house between 1936 and 1960, but those on the second floor appear to be original. The paint on the inside of the windows in the North front chamber matches the first layer of paint found on the other woodwork in the room, and the framing and mullions are uniform throughout the second floor. Around the front and south (funeral door) entrances there are bolection moldings; in the front a single door is set between two louvres (no panes behind) running the full length of the door. The louvres are panelled over on the inside. Around the top of the surround one can see where later clapboards have been fitted in where a more elaborate and earlier architrave was located. Most of the clapboards and rosehead nails on the facade are early, and by all appearances original in most cases.

¹Town of Simsbury, Land Records, vol. 4, Simsbury Town Vault. p. 10R.

²Ibid, vol. 6, p. 542. Deed of Nathaniel Holcomb III to Nathaniel Higley, Sept. 28, 1733.

^{*}(INSERT):Originally this house was framed as an integral lean-to but was later altered to the full 2½ stories.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

Town of Granby Survey of Historical and Architectural Resources

1980

Local

Connecticut Historical Commission

Hartford, CT

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The windows on the left of the north elevation up and down have the same 8-over-12 sash, window framing, and interior paint as the facade windows, but the two on the right and the one in the attic gable have 6-over-6 sash. A one and one half story ell with an entrance and two windows stretches back from the north corner of the rear elevation, and to that a small shed (9'x10' - built at a later date) is attached on the north side at the cellar level (See plot plan). Except for this point where the ground dips suddenly at the shed, the sills of the house are all 6" - 12" from the ground. In the corner where the ell joins the rear elevation, over a second ell entrance, is a grape arbor. The rear elevation itself has an entranceway into the old kitchen or keeping room; and a fourth entranceway is found on the east corner of the south elevation under an added porch, which is partially enclosed. The entranceway to the keeping room has an early batten door on the bottom half, and may be the original rear entrance.

The house is entirely sided with clapboards, 3½" exposed to the weather, with early wrought, rose-head nails. The house is now painted white, although early red paint was found on the sheathing near the southeast corner post while the corner board was removed. The roof has asphalt shingles on top of wooden shingles, a fairly steep pitch, plain rakeboards, and a lightly molded cornice, with no return. Rising from the centers of the main house and the ell respectively are two chimneys, both of brick on the outside, although the main chimney is of stone with clay or mud plaster to the top of the roofline.

Interior

The interior is constructed on the central chimney plan. In the front entrance hall a stairway ascends from the south side with three risers to a landing on the chimney wall, then making a 90° turn and ascending five risers parallel to the chimney wall to a landing, then turning 90° toward the front of the house and ascending three risers to the second floor (Photograph 2). Underneath is a panelled cupboard, the door of which has a three-panel arrangement. The hinges of the cupboard door still have the leather washers. Against the chimney is a wall of wainscoting that rises to the second floor level. There are molded square newel posts, and two reeded balusters per tread in a closed string. Also the treads have molded front edges, as do the corners of the cases on the chimney girts in the entrance hall. All the woodwork has been scraped to reveal an original coat of dark blue-green, and refinished to match that color.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

To the right, or north, of the entrance hall is a room with raised panelling with a natural wood finish on all four walls (Photograph 3 - a close look in the corners reveals early green paint matching that in the entrance hall). The mantel, with a bolection molding, and a series of boxes formed by molding across the lintel, is of later construction, for there is a larger stone fireplace behind the brick upon which this mantel is based. The two doors to this room have some very old latches with heartshaped plates, and on the backs of the doors the outlines of original strap hinges can be made out. Among the floor boards are some of the widest planks in the house, averaging 25" in width.

In the room to the left of the entrance hall there are two panels over the fireplace and a cupboard to the left, but the rest of the fireplace wall is plastered, which, along with a more elaborately molded mantel than found elsewhere in the house, may have been installed as replacement for the original panelling. There was a built-in cupboard in the southwest corner of this room, as can be seen by cuts on the floorboards. This room also has its original flooring, fastened with rose-head nails.

In the old kitchen the fireplace wall is panelled and around the fireplace is a delicate mitred molding (which is also found around the stairway door of the north front room) (Photographs 4 and 5). The panelling in the kitchen, as in the north front room, has a natural finish (again with traces of the green paint of the entrance hall). On the north wall between the kitchen and a bath, perhaps an old buttery, is a staircase ascending toward the front of the house. The wall is sheathed with vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot 21"-25" in width; inside the staircase the wainscoting on the lefthand wall has a bevel where each board joins the other. The fireplace opening is fully 4½' high with a bake oven high up in the back and three apertures on the right cheek. The side ovens themselves have undergone some alteration, it appears, for the present uppermost opening is square, and although the oven itself is now bricked in to cover the furnace flue, it is possible to see an arched opening six inches within the square opening. The ceiling is open and exposes some interesting framing (see below), as well as the early plaster line on the walls. There is a small back room to the south of the old kitchen where some early stenciling on the plaster can be found.

In the ell is a central chimney with a fireplace in each of the two rooms. Neither of these rooms, nor the old kitchen, has its original flooring, unlike all of the remaining rooms in the main house. While the ell was an addition (clapboards were found between it and the old kitchen), it does appear that the ell was constructed before 1800. The rear posts are flared, and the ell itself is built off the right, or north, rear corner.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

In the upstairs hall and in the south front chamber is a molded chair rail. The woodwork in the north front chamber has been scraped to expose an original gold, including a dark red on the baseboard and across the bottom of both doors as a mock baseboard. The doors have H & L hinges. Both this room and the south front chamber have plank floors, again with rose-head nails. The chair rail is not repeated in the north front chamber. The door in the south front chamber is fitted with another kind of old latch with rounded plates and hatch marks on the handle.

The kitchen chamber is unfinished and reveals some interesting framing. The chimney girts at the attic floor level consist of beams spliced together about 1½' behind the rear chimney posts (Photograph 6). This was found to be true also of the end girts at the attic level when some of the attic flooring was removed.

Other elements of the framing were investigated, and it was found that, while the front cornerposts extend from foundation to roof, the rear corner and rear chimney posts extend only to the second floor (Photograph 7). Second story posts are then mortised into the end girts and extend to the roof. In the attic there is more unusual framing. Contrary to Kelly's assertions about the normal mode of construction³, there is a square ridge pole, into which rafters with bark still on them are mortised (Photograph 8); yet there are no purlins or braces, and the studs on the attic walls are nailed into place. Some of the rafters seem to be "recycled" for they have long notches with no apparent function.

The chimney is of stone all the way to the roof line, and in the attic can be seen some old clay binding and a smoke oven on the stack (Photograph 9). There is a full cellar under the entire house except one room in the ell.

³J. Frederick Kelly, The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut (New York, 1924), p. 46.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

Other Features

Outside there are three outbuildings, a pond, and an orchard. The outhouse and milkhouse are of early 20th-century construction, and the pond was built by the present owner by damming up the brook that crosses the road south of the house. The main part of the barn appears to be very early. There are massive posts and beams - some 10"x10", and heavy oak or chestnut rafters, braces and purlins. One room has plastered walls. According to early deeds⁴ there has been a barn and an orchard on the property at least as far back as 1733, although the V-shaped ridge pole in this barn would date it later.

⁴Town of Simsbury, Records, vol 6, p. 542. Deed of Holcomb to Higley, 1733.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1720 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criteria

The Nathaniel Holcomb III House is significant, firstly, because its early owners played key roles in the history of the community as primary military, civil, and religious founders and leaders; and the succession of all owners illuminates some great movements in American social history, such as expansion of the frontier, the growth of individualism at the expense of communalism, the breakdown of Congregational unity and the decline of the economy of rural New England (Criterion B). Secondly, the house is a distinctive illustration of early 18th-century New England domestic architecture, for it has well preserved architectural detail within and without - moldings, floors, plastering, paneling, hardware, masonry, framing, and siding (Criterion C). And finally, because of the visibility of some of the alterations in framing, the house is a clear exposition of the development from the integral lean-to to a house that is a full 2½-story house throughout with two-story rear posts ¹ (also Criterion C).

History

There is good evidence that this house was constructed in early 1720 by Nathaniel Holcomb III, grandson of one of the first settlers in the Salmon Brook section of Simsbury - the section later to become Granby. The antiquity of much of the house points to this conclusion. Originally the house was constructed in lean-to form. The spliced girts at the attic level, the unfinished kitchen chamber, the reconstructed roof with its notched rafters, and the two-piece rear posts all support this view. Other structural evidence of a pre-1750 building date includes the kitchen fireplace with its back oven and stone cheeks, the wrought rose-head nails throughout the house, the signs of strap hinges in the north front room, and the stone chimney all the way to the roofline. Also, the cutmarks around the front door, and the purely decorative louvred sidelights around a door clearly fitted for a 19th-century doorknob, suggest the strong possibility of a double-hung door with a more elaborate architrave in the original entranceway.

¹See Kelly, p. 43

9. Major Bibliographical References

Austin, Ethel Lindstrom, The Story of the Churches of Granby.
Granby: Holcomb Fund Committee, 1968

Bartholomew, George Wells, Jr., Record of the Bartholomew Family.
Austin, Texas, publ. by the Author, 1885 (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 5 acres

Quadrangle name Tariffville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	6	8	1	4	4	0	4	6	4	6	3	2	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

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

Zone Easting Northing

C

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

D

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

E

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

F

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

G

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

H

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

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is described in volume 78, pp. 151-2 of the Granby Land Records (see plot plan attached - Parcel **A**)

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 Mark Williams, Member of the Board of Directors

organization Salmon Brook Historical Society date April 30, 1981

street & number 68 Simsbury Road telephone 203-653-7193

city or town West Granby 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

Entered in the
National Register

date

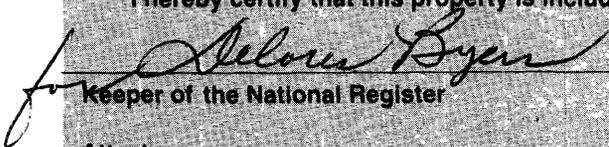
4/29/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

The deeds to the property do not refer to any specific structure but do demonstrate that there has been a house in this precise location since the 1720s. On January 19, 1719/20 the town of Simsbury (Granby was part of Simsbury until 1786) granted a series of six acre parcels along what is now Bushy Hill Road. These are obviously house-and-barnyard plots set aside amidst large areas of commons for Simsbury's young men coming of age. The piece beginning at the crossing of "Crooked Brook" and the road (Bushy Hill Road) was granted to Nathaniel Holcomb III, a twenty-three year old man, married three years, with one daughter, child number two on the way, and who was ready to move out of his father's house two miles east.² A deed of 1726 mentions a "dwelling farm" of Nathaniel III,³ so the house would seem to have been constructed soon after the grant was made.

Because a deed of transfer in 1794 was lost in a fire in 1876 in which many Granby records were burned, it was necessary to study the records of neighboring parcels in order to trace the title of the Holcomb house. Ebenezer Lampson, and his father, neighbors to the north, occupied their land before and after that date and it was possible to search through his deeds to find out his southern neighbors at various points. One of these, Nathaniel Higley, had a deed of 1733 which described the property, and its relation to the road so clearly, that there can be no mistake that he was the new owner then.⁴ He purchased it (including "house, barn and orchard") from Nathaniel Holcomb III. Nathaniel Higley died in 1777, leaving his property to children Daniel and

²Town of Simsbury, Births, Marriages, and Deaths. Transcribed from the Town Records and published by Albert C. Bates (Hartford, 1898), pp. 19, 21, 24, 29, 30. Town of Simsbury, Records, vol. 4., p. 10R.

³Town of Simsbury, Records, vol. 5, p. 52. Deed of Nathaniel Holcomb to Nathaniel Holcomb, Jr., April 26, 1726

⁴Ibid., vol. 6, p. 542

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Mary, and wife Abigail.⁵ After the Revolutionary War these three moved to Vermont.⁶ The property was then (1781) sold to Samuel Hayes, Jr., a large landowner whose farm was about one-half mile south.⁷ Hayes probably bought the house for one of his ten children, four of whom were in their twenties in 1781. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what happened with the house and property for the next five or six years because of the town records fire.

A number of facts do suggest a viable theory. First, Samuel Hayes was a deacon in the Salmon Brook Ecclesiastical Society, Simsbury's northern branch of the Congregational Church. The Society, in 1793, had just dismissed its minister, Israel Haley, and was seeking a competent replacement. In 1794 they found one in Isaac Porter, a Yale graduate (class of 1788), and a student of Rev. John Smawley, D.D., a prominent clergyman in New Britain. Porter seems to have acquired property in Granby in that year, for the records show him admitted as a freeman in September.⁸ A second consideration is the apparent age of the alterations on the house. While the roof framing, with its lack of purlins and braces, and its nailed-in wall studs, still presents a mystery, the rest of the framing alteration, creating a 2½-story house, together with the wrought nails and flared posts in the ell, and the brick bake ovens, suggest that changes were made in the house around this time. Deacon Porter, son of Deacon Hayes, inherited plenty of land to accommodate his children in 1790; *was engaged in luring a graduate of Yale to his fledgling town, with a newly renovated house not more than half a mile from the Society meetinghouse. Another possibility is that the house was the parsonage even under Haley, for the 1790 census indicates that Haley was a close neighbor of the Lampsons, who had, for years, owned the land north of the original Nathaniel Holcomb grant.

⁵District of Simsbury, Probate Records, vol. 1., Simsbury Town Vault, p. 146.

⁶Mary Coffin Johnson, The Higleys and their Ancestry, 2nd edition, (New York, 1892), p. 140.

⁷Simsbury, Records, vol. 13, p. 412.

⁸Town of Granby, Town Meeting Records, vol. 1, p. 16

*(INSERT): and so one might surmise he

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

From 1794 on, the history of the title is straightforward: Isaac Porter to Consider Morgan 1835, Morgan's heirs to James C. Bartholomew 1851, Bartholomew to John Milton Lewis 1875, Lewis to Arthur Rice 1884, Rice's administrators to Michael Kelly 1904, Kelly to Alice Biram 1936, and Biram to the present owners 1969.

The first four owners were leading figures in Granby's early history. Holcomb, great-grandson of one of Windsor's first settlers, was a captain in the Simsbury militia, led a company of men in the French and Indian War, and held the post of First Selectman of Simsbury for many years. More importantly, for the future town of Granby, he was a covenant member of the Salmon Brook Society which he joined in 1736 at its founding*. The Salmon Brook Society was actually the precursor of the town of Granby for the bounds of the Society were eventually the bounds of the town. Nathaniel Higley, a professional surveyor, was never in the first echelon of town officeholders, but according to Higley family geneologists, he was deeply involved in the bringing of New Light practices to the Salmon Brook Ecclesiastical Society, separating it theologically, as well as physically, from the main community of Simsbury. Samuel Hayes, or Captain Hayes, a Revolutionary War soldier, was not only a deacon in the Society, but also Granby's first First Selectman when the new town was incorporated in 1786. Isaac Porter, of course, was the town's spiritual leader for nearly forty years until his age, antiquated notions, and the turmoil of the Second Great Awakening forced his resignation amidst a bitter battle over the building of a new meetinghouse.

Besides finding the owners of this house among Granby's spiritual leaders and founders, a study of their lives and times can contribute toward a greater understanding of the history of the community, and of the region. The owners seem to fit into the general pattern that has been emerging from recent research in Granby's and New England's past.⁹ Originally, Granby was part of the Simsbury commons, but two forces, the development of the land by the third and fourth, more independent, generations**and the adoption of New Light practices in a separate ecclesiastical

⁹See Collections of the Salmon Brook Historical Society, vols. I and II (1979 and 1980). Also there has been independent research done on other houses in the area, which tends to reveal the patterns mentioned: Mark Williams, "Miller, Farmer, Peddler, Speculator - Rich Man, Poor Man, Debtorman, Thief". (August, 1979). Mark Williams, "The Tanner's House", (Dec., 1978). Both Unpubl. Mss. in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. James Orr and Mr. and Mrs. William Pinkney, respectively, of Granby.

*(INSERT):when residents of northern Simsbury wanted to have a meeting house nearer their settlement.

** (INSERT):who would eventually desire a meetinghouse closer to home.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

society, led to a desire for separation on the part of the northern residents of Simsbury. Holcomb and Higley, the first two owners of the house, were ~~deeply~~ involved in and representative of these trends - Holcomb taking up the new houselot grant far from the center of town, and both signing the covenant of the new society. Furthermore, we see in their children, many of whom moved to Vermont and New York subsequent to the Revolution, the irrepressible force toward the frontier, which, together with the turmoil of the Great Awakening, would drive many young people from the center of formerly cooperative communities, or divide the communities themselves.¹⁰

After Granby's incorporation in 1786, its leaders made an effort to maintain the ideals of cooperation and religious homogeneity in spite of growing individualism in business enterprise and increasing secularism or diversity in religious faith. Hayes and Porter are representative of this tension - Hayes a Deacon and a Selectman, Porter maintaining, according to Ethel Austin, a chronicler of Granby church history, a strict adherence to Puritan rules of decorum and church attendance - even after disestablishment in 1818. Porter's later years were a classic example of the Puritan church under seige in the early 1800's. He fought for temperance, preached for hours at a time, brought in revivalists - but to no avail. The old unity crumbled as the people turned to Universalism, Baptism, Methodism, and the West. In 1832, his cantankerous demeanor and the bitter mood of the congregation, occasioned by the split over the new meetinghouse, forced his dismissal. Thus these community leaders' lives, when viewed in succession, form a pattern that helps to illustrate the social history of Granby, and to confirm hypotheses being offered about the social history of New England.

¹⁰For complete discussion of these trends, see Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765. (1967); Robert Gross, The Minutemen and Their World (New York, 1975), and Richard Brown, "Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America, 1600-1865", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, II (Winter, 1972), pp. 201-228.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

The same can be said of the other owners of the house as well, even though they were not community leaders. Granby seems to have gone through a brief period of industrialization and urbanization in the early 19th-century, and then slipped into a prolonged rural depression after the Civil War.¹¹ In the house there was Consider Morgan, a medical doctor and financial pioneer in Connecticut's railroad industry; and James Bartholomew, the gentleman farmer whose daughter, Jane, ran a finishing school in the back room of the ell, and later was a famous teacher at the state's new normal school in New Britain (now Central Connecticut State College). These two represent Granby's economic prime. The next two, John Lewis and Arthur Rice, the latter of whom went bankrupt, represent the lean years, after industry failed to develop in Granby; and the next, Michael Kelly, grandson of an Irish immigrant, demonstrates how only through specialization (in this case dairy farming) could a farmer survive. Thus does perspective on all of the owners contribute to our understanding of Granby's social history, and, perhaps rural New England's as well.

Architecture

The Nathaniel Holcomb III House, although typical of early 18th-century New England domestic architecture, is significant because it still has a great amount of original architectural detail - panelling, molding, hardware, masonry, and planking - intact. When all of the delicate molding was done is not yet known. Much of the work, particularly in the entrance hall, looks too elaborate for 1720, although, in that room the molding is all carefully integrated with the cupboard panelling and adjacent door to the north front room, which with their three-panel arrangement and leather washers on the hinges, is in keeping with a 1720 date. Also, behind the chimney wall of the entrance hall some original blue-green paint had dripped behind the chair rail, which was apparently put in before the plastering on the wall upstairs was done. If this hall was added to make it more attractive at a later date, the whole interior must have been redone, but there is no evidence that such massive reconstruction occurred. The supposition is, then, that much of the fine molding is original and

¹¹See Mark Williams, "Family and Neighbors in Hard Times: West Granby 1840-1900." Unpubl. Mss., December, 1980, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Day Collection; Mark Williams, "Goodrichville in its Prime," Unpubl. Mss., August, 1979, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Berg Collection, and Mark Williams, "Urban Culture in Granby, Connecticut", Unpubl. Mss., May, 1975.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 6

is thus an example of some decorative work at an early date. Other original material includes the wainscoting, framing materials, foundation and chimney stones, floorboards, clapboards, rosehead nails throughout the house, the attic smoke oven, batten and panelled doors, beam casings, and all five hearthstones and fireplaces (although three are covered).

The other significant architectural aspect is that the exposed rear chimney posts and exposed splices on the attic chimney girts show clearly the development of the central chimney house from a lean-to frame to a full 2½ stories throughout. The change in framing was confirmed by the investigation of the corner posts and end girts. The framing of the roof still is not in conformity with a mode of construction of any particular period, but the rest of the frame provides a good look at construction methods of different generations.

Summary

At this time the Nathaniel Holcomb III House is the oldest house in Granby whose date has been confirmed through research in the records and through use of architectural evidence. This is not to say it is the oldest extant, for a few of Granby's such early houses have not been totally researched and dated, nor their relative originality confirmed. Certainly, though, having been the domicile of some of the town's leading citizens, and of others whose lives symbolize the history of Connecticut's rural communities, and having still intact so much early work, including a clear display of framing alternatives, this house is one of the town's most important.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

- Brown, Richard, "Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America 1600-1865". Journal of Interdisciplinary History, II (Winter, 1972), pp.201-228
- Bushman, Richard L., From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut 1690-1765, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Dexter, Franklin Bowditch, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, vol. IV New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1907.
- First Ecclesiastical Society of Salmon Brook, Records. Connecticut State Library Archives.
- Granby, Town of, Land Records. Granby Town Vault.
_____, Probate Records. Granby Town Vault
_____, Town Meeting Records. Granby Town Vault.
_____, Vital Statistics. Granby Town Vault.
- Gross, Robert, The Minutemen and Their World. New York: Oxford Press, 1975
- Johnson, Mary Coffin, The Higleys and their Ancestors. New York: The Grafton Press, 1892.
- Kelly, J. Frederick, The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1924.
- Simsbury, Town of, Births, Marriages, and Deaths. Transcribed and published by Albert C. Bates. Hartford: 1898.
_____, Land Records. Simsbury Town Vault.
_____, Probate Records. Simsbury Town Vault.
_____, Town Meeting Records. Simsbury Town Vault.
- Morgan, Nathaniel H., The History of James Morgan. Hartford: Case, Lockwood, and Brainard, 1869.
- Salmon Brook Historical Society, Folder of the "First Ecclesiastical Society of Salmon Brook." Society Archives.
_____, Collections of the Salmon Brook Historical Society, vols. I and II (1979 and 1980).
- United States, U.S. Census Manuscript Listings of Heads of Family, 1790-1870. Connecticut State Library Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Williams, Mark, "Family and Neighbors in Hard Times: West Granby 1840-1900". Unpubl. Mss., Dec., 1980, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Day Collection, West Granby.

_____, "Goodrichville in it's Prime", Unpubl. Mss., August, 1979, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Berg Collection, Granby.

_____, "Miller, Farmer, Peddler, Speculator - Rich Man, Poor Man, Debtorman, Thief", Unpubl. Mss., August, 1939, Mr. and Mrs. James Orr Collection, West Granby.

_____, "The Tanner's House", Unpubl. Mss., December, 1978, Mr. and Mrs. William Pinckney Collection, Granby.

_____, "Urban Culture in Granby, Conn.", Unpubl., Mss., May, 1975.