

**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:** 92001638      **Date Listed:** 12/14/92

Curtisville Historic District                      Hartford                      CT  
**Property Name**                                      **County**                                      **State**

N/A  
**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.**

  
**Signature of the Keeper**

12/14/92  
**Date of Action**

**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**10. Geographical Data: VBD**

The reduced scale for the sketch map sufficing for the VBD is 1" = 330'.

This information has been discussed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

OCT 30 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 Curtisville Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet NA not for publication  
city, town Glastonbury NA vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06033

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>91</u>	<u>28</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>91</u>	<u>28</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 10/23/92  
State or Federal agency and bureau Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

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:) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 12/14/92  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single/multiple dwelling/secondary  
structure  
AGRICULTURE/animal facility/storage  
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single/multiple dwelling/  
secondary structure  
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)  
MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival/Gothic Revival  
LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate/Queen Anne  
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)  
foundation stone  
walls weatherboard  
roof asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Curtisville Historic District is a small, densely settled residential and industrial neighborhood. It is located just to the west of upper Main street in the northwest corner of Glastonbury. A major meander of the Connecticut River lies to the west and south of the district and comes within one tenth of a mile of its southwestern boundary. The historic resources are concentrated along a loop formed by Naubuc Avenue and Pratt Street; both streets connect to Main Street on the east. Modern intrusion and woodland on the western side of the district have been excluded, creating a district of irregular form (see attached district map). A nineteenth-century industrial complex, which contains five brick buildings, is set back from Naubuc Avenue on the south bank of Salmon Brook, which runs through the district from the northeast to the southwest to the Connecticut River.

Twenty-eight of the 119 resources in the district are non-contributing: one altered historic house, 12 modern houses, 14 modern garages or outbuildings, and a remodeled church which has lost its integrity. The contributing resources are primarily residential dating from 1788 to 1929.

The present appearance of the district reflects its historic development from the late eighteenth century through the 1930s. The recent modern intrusion in the area includes post-World War II housing and a small 1992 development at the west end, the latter excluded from the district. Some of the houses have new sidings, ranging from asphalt and asbestos shingles to modern aluminum and vinyl, but most have retained their characteristic form, massing, and important architectural features, especially doorways and porches. A number have retained their period outbuildings, which include nine animal and tobacco barns and a number of early-twentieth-century garages. The factory complex has also undergone modern alteration, principally the blocking of windows and the addition of fabricated metal shed additions.

Settlement in the district dates from the late eighteenth century when the area was farmland and agricultural products were shipped from nearby wharves in Keeney Cove on the Connecticut River. The earliest houses are all five-bay, ridge-to-street buildings, basically a colonial form which persisted up until about 1840, often modified with Federal- or Greek Revival-style features. Most display large center chimneys, although a few have a center-hall plan such as one on Pratt street that displays a Federal-style portico (Inventory #96; Photograph #1).

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Location

Naubuc Avenue: 11-13, 17-19, 25, 26-28, 33, 42, 47, 50, 53, 56-58, 61, 65, 66, 71,  
74, 75, 82, 83, 91-93, 92, 97, 98, 101, 106, 114, 122, 132, 138, 142  
142, 150, 154, 256, 262, 266, 278-280, 286-288, 298-300, 306-308.

Parker Terrace: 10-12, 27-35, 39, 40-42, 46, 55, 60-64, 66-70.

Parker Terrace Extension: 14-16, 17, 30, 56-58, 62, 66.

Pratt Street: 48, 49, 58, 61-63, 66, 76-78, 81, 82, (— Rear Parker Terrace Ext.)  
88-90, 89, 96-98, 112, 130, 138, 146, 151, 163, 171, 179, 187,  
197-199, 204.

Rear Parker Terrace Extension: no address number (See Pratt Street for location.)

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Beginning in the 1830s, Greek Revival doorways and porticos were also common original or added features, as exemplified by a group of similar houses at the west end of Naubuc Avenue. They have full pediments in the gable ends and corner pilasters, as well as entrances of this style (Inventory #s 57, 59, 60; Photograph #2). The Benjamin Hale House on Pratt Street is another example of Greek Revival-style remodeling (Inventory #103, Photograph #3). Built about 1788, it was redesigned with a number of style features, including a trabeated doorway, with a full entablature, and atypical fluted window surrounds with corner blocks.

The Greek Revival form and style were also a major influence in workers' housing in the the district. Early examples, small single-family cottages probably built by the Curtis Manufacturing Company, simply have the gable-to-street orientation and the relatively shallow pitch of the roof that are commonly associated with early examples of this style (Inventory #s 31, 50). Later larger examples, usually displaying the full pediment of this style, were built after 1863 by the industrial successor in the village, the Connecticut Arms and Manufacturing Company (Inventory #s 33, 38, 44, and possibly 37). They have a taller, more narrow form, usually with a three-bay facade. The two types are located near the factory on Naubuc Avenue (Photograph #4).

Other company-built housing in the district includes an individual example of the Carpenter Gothic style, constructed for the mill agent in 1863 on the eastern border of the millyard (Inventory #77; Photograph #5). Its decorative form and features, including bargeboards on its steeply peaked gables, contrasts markedly with the adjacent factory buildings and the utilitarian company tenements built nearby by 1900. The latter houses are all long ridge-to-street buildings with gable roofs. The best-preserved example of this type stands to the rear of the mill agent's house (Inventory #78; Photograph #6).

Individual vernacular buildings were constructed in the district through the rest of the nineteenth century by tradesmen, farmers, and skilled workers. Most are Victorian Vernacular types that display elements of the nineteenth-century styles. Although a number of smaller single-family houses of this period are found in the district, especially along the south side of Naubuc Avenue, a duplex built by Alfred Phelps in 1896 is representative of the larger vernacular houses in its cross-gable plan and extensive veranda (Inventory #14; Photograph #7). Several stores built in this period have a residential appearance and display facade pediments. This feature is found on both the house and store built by bootmaker John Sellow (Inventory #s 98, 100; Photograph #8).

An exceptional example of the Italianate, currently being restored, was built in 1865 by one of the Welles family, which had interests in cigarmaking and shipbuilding in the area. Although using the villa form, it has a prominent hipped roof and displays porticos and porches that are highly detailed in this style (Inventory #27; Photograph #9).

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The Colonial Revival style was popular in the district for several types of housing in the early twentieth century. Duplexes, as well as individual houses, were built in the Four Square hipped-roof form, along with gambrel and gable-roofed examples of this style, the latter often displaying pediments more reminiscent of the Queen Anne style. Duplexes at the east end of Naubuc Avenue were built by Richard Wooldridge and also on Parker Terrace, an area laid out for development by 1900 (Inventory #s 1, 2, 63; Photograph #s 10). The Colonial Revival was also chosen for the Grange Hall built on Naubuc Avenue in 1929 (Inventory #9).

At the Pratt Street entrance to the district is a distinctive single-family Four Square house built in 1911 by Sherman Risley, a tobacco farmer (Inventory #79; Photograph #11). It is distinguished by the turreted dormer on the front slope of the roof and its degree of Colonial Revival detail, including the oval key-blocked window at the second floor of the facade, the dentil course defining the two levels, and the small widow's walk at the center of the hipped roof.

The existing factory buildings were constructed of brick and brownstone between 1863 and 1870 (Inventory #s 40, 41, 42, 43; Photograph #s 12, 13.) Two detached buildings now joined together face Naubuc Avenue and illustrate changes in factory construction in this period. The original block of the west end, which may incorporate an earlier structure, has a front facing gable with a corbelled pediment. It has brownstone lintels and sills, a material also used for the lower story wall, where brownstone blocks have pecked surfaces and chiseled margins. At the east end, a long two-story factory built by 1880 has a the more typical brick-pier construction, but it still utilizes segmental brick arches over its larger paired windows. At the center of its facade is a large stair tower, square in plan, with a hipped roof. To the rear are two more contemporaneous brick buildings, one of which incorporates a polygonal brick stack. The former mill office, also of brick, is set closer to Pratt Street (Inventory #39).

A complete list of contributing and non-contributing resources in the district follows:

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CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Inv.#	Address	Name/Date/Style	C/NC	Photo
1.	11-13 Naubuc Avenue	Richard Wooldridge House Four-square, c. 1915	C	10
2.	17-19	Colonial Revival Duplex, c. 1920	C	10
3.	17-19	garage associated with #2	C	
4.	25	modern, c. 1950	NC	
5.	26-28	Victorian Vernacular, c. 1900	C	
6.	26-28	garage associated with #5, modern	NC	
7.	33	modern ranch, c. 1960	NC	
8.	42	St. Paul's Hall, c. 1880 (altered)	NC	
9.	47	Goodwill Grange Hall Colonial Revival, 1929	C	
10.	50	Four Square, c. 1915	C	
11.	50	garage associated with #10, c. 1920	C	
12.	53	Victorian Vernacular, c. 1890	C	
13.	53	garage associated with #12, c. 1920	C	
14.	56-58	Alfred E. Phelps House Victorian Vernacular, 1896	C	7
15.	56-58	garage associated with #14, c. 1960	NC	
16.	61	late-19th-century vernacular c. 1900, remodelled	NC	
17.	65	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
18.	65	garage associated with #17, c. 1930	C	
19.	66	late-19th-century vernacular, c. 1880	C	

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20.	66 Naubuc Avenue	garage associated with #19, c. 1920	C	
21.	71	Gothic Revival, c. 1910	C	
22.	71	garage associated with #21, c. 1920	C	
23.	74	C. T. McCracken House Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
24.	74	garage, c. 1950	NC	
25.	75	Victorian Vernacular, c. 1880	C	
26.	75	garage, c. 1950	NC	
27.	82	Welles House, Italianate, c. 1865	C	9
28.	83	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
29.	83	barn/garage associated with #29, c. 1890	C	
30.	91-93	modern, c. 1980	NC	
31.	92	Curtis Company House Greek Revival cottage, c. 1850	C	4
32.	97	modern Ranch, c. 1960	NC	
33.	98	Connecticut Arms Company House Greek Revival, c. 1865	C	4
34.	98	garage associated with #33, c. 1960	NC	
35.	101	Colonial Revival, c. 1935	C	
36.	101	garage associated with #35, c. 1950	NC	
37.	106	Greek Revival, c. 1865	C	
38.	114	Connecticut Arms Company House Greek Revival, c. 1860	C	
39.	122	Mill office building, c. 1870	C	
40.	122	Connecticut Arms and Manufacturing Co. Industrial, 1863, c. 1880	C	12, 13



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41.	122 Naubuc Avenue	Industrial building, c. 1870	C	
42.	122	Industrial building, c. 1870	C	
43.	122	Industrial building, c. 1870	C	
44.	132	Connecticut Arms Company House Greek Revival, c. 1865	C	
45.	132	garage associated with #44, c. 1930	C	
46.	138	Greek Revival cottage, c. 1850	C	
47.	142	Greek Revival cottage, c. 1860	C	
48.	142	garage associated with #47, c. 1930	C	
49.	150	19th-century vernacular, c. 1870	C	
50.	154	Curtiss Company House Greek Revival cottage, c. 1850	C	
51.	256	William J. Meyers House Victorian Vernacular, c. 1890	C	
52.	256	former firehouse, c. 1880	C	
53.	256	garage associated with #51, c. 1930	C	
54.	262	Isaiah Olcott House 18th-century vernacular with Greek Revival detail, c. 1790/c. 1840	C	
55.	266	Hannah Williams House Victorian Vernacular, c. 1885	C	
56.	266	garage associated with #55, c. 1970	NC	
57.	278-280	John Alford House Greek Revival, c. 1809/c. 1850	C	
58.	278-280	garage associated with #57, c. 1945	NC	
59.	286-288	Frederick Curtis/Thomas Vail House Federal/Greek Revival, c. 1820/c. 1850	C	
60.	298-300	Albert Bogue House Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	2

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61.	298-300 Naubuc Avenue	garage associated with #60, c. 1920	C	
62.	306-308	19th-century vernacular, c. 1805	C	
63.	10-12 Parker Terrace	Colonial Revival duplex, c. 1900	C	
64.	27-35	Vernacular duplex, c. 1900	C	
65.	39	Colonial Revival, 1932	C	
66.	40-42	Ida C. Fresk House Four Square duplex, c. 1924	C	
67.	40-42	barn associated with #66, c. 1890	C	
68.	46	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
69.	46	garage associated with #68, c. 1930	C	
70.	55	modern Ranch, 1969	NC	
71.	60-64	modern, c. 1950	NC	
72.	66-70	Connecticut Arms Company Tenement 19th-century vernacular, 1861	C	
73.	14-16 Parker Terrace Extension	19th-century vernacular, c. 1880	C	
74.	17	modern, c. 1980	NC	
75.	30	modern, c. 1960	NC	
76.	56-58	Connecticut Arms Company Tenement 19th-century vernacular, 1863	C	6
77.	62	Mill Agent's House Carpenter Gothic, 1863	C	5
78.	66	Connecticut Arms Company Tenement 19th-century vernacular, 1861	C	
79.	48 Pratt Street	Sherman D. Risley House Four Square, 1911	C	11
80.	48	barn associated with #79, c. 1900		

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81.	49 Pratt Street	barn associated with #84, c. 1880	C	
82.	58	modern, c. 1960	NC	
83.	58	outbuilding assoc. with #82, c. 1960	NC	
84.	61-63	Anna & William Risley House Greek Revival/Victorian Vernacular c. 1850/c. 1880	C	
85.	61-63	garage associated with #84, c. 1930	C	
86.	61-63	garage associated with #84, c. 1930	C	
87.	66	Colonial Revival, c. 1935	C	
88.	76-78	William & Sadie Pollard House Four Square, c. 1925	C	
89.	76-78	garage associated with #88, c. 1925	C	
90.	81	19th-century vernacular, c. 1850	C	
91.	82	modern Ranch, c. 1990	NC	
92.	--	19th-century vernacular, c. 1840 (known as -- Rear Parker Terrace Extension	C	
93.	88-90	late-19th-century vernacular, c. 1890	C	
94.	89	Joseph Curtis House Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
95.	89	barn/garage assoc. with #94, c. 1900	C	
96.	96-98	Colonial/Federal, c.1800	C	1
97.	112	Modern, c. 1960	NC	
98.	130	Joseph L. Sellow House Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	8
99.	130	barn assoc. with #98, c. 1850	C	
100.	138	Joseph Sellow Store Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	8

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101.	138	tobacco barn assoc. with #100, c. 1880	C	
102.	138 Pratt Street	garage associated with #100, c. 1930	C	
103.	146	Benjamin Hale-Thomas Reed House Colonial/Greek Revival, c. 1788/1845	C	3
104.	146	barn associated with #103, c. 1880	C	
105.	151	19th-century vernacular, c. 1850	C	
106.	151	tobacco barn assoc. with #105, c. 1880	C	
107.	151	barn associated with #105, c. 1880	C	
108.	151	shed associated with #105, c. 1980	NC	
109.	163	modern Ranch, c. 1980	NC	
110.	163	garage associated with #109, c. 1980	NC	
111.	171	Victorian Vernacular, c. 1890	C	
112.	171	garage associated with #111, c. 1950	NC	
113.	171	shed associated with #111, c. 1980	NC	
114.	179	Captain Asbael Keeney House, Greek Revival, c. 1840		
115.	187	Peckham-Phelps Store Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
116.	187	garage associated with #115, c. 1960	NC	
117.	197-199	Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	
118.	204	19th-century vernacular, c. 1880	C	
119.	204	garage associated with #118, c. 1930	C	

**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)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Period of Significance

c. 1850 - 1940

c. 1780 - 1935

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Significant Dates

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Curtisville Historic District is significant as a cohesive entity which illustrates the history of the village from 1780 to 1930, a pattern of development that was typical in rural towns of the upper Connecticut River Valley where industry and agriculture often prospered in tandem. Although few houses are individually distinguished, the architectural significance of the district lies in its broad range of representative styles and types, which includes fully realized examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic architecture, often built by wealthy farmers, as well as simpler vernacular houses built for and by the workforce at the village factory.

Historical Development

The broad fertile alluvial plain of the Connecticut River Valley brought settlers to the region in the early seventeenth century. The first settlements at Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor were all located on the west side of the river but by 1700 cattle were grazed on the broad meadows of the east side and settlement soon followed. The settlers of Naubuc, later to become known as Glastonbury, who came to the area from Wethersfield, soon divided up the land into large strips extending eastward from the river and built their homesteads on the first river terrace, generally along the path of present-day Main Street.

In the late eighteenth century, their large farms had been divided among their descendants and settlement began to the west of Main Street in the Great Meadows. Farmhouses were built by men such as Benjamin Hale and members of the Welles family, the beginning of the community later known as Curtisville (Inventory #103). Because of the proximity of the Connecticut River, these farmers not only had a ready market for their produce at the wharves on Keeney Cove at the outlet of Salmon Brook, but they also harvested the fish in the annual runs of shad, salmon, and alewives. River captains and coasters who made their home in the district included Asabel Keeney (Inventory #114). Other early maritime activities there included shipbuilding and a ferry at the foot of Pratt Street. Like the more well-known ferry in South Glastonbury, it transported goods and people across the river for more than a century.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

McNulty, Marjorie Grant. Glastonbury: From Settlement to Suburb. Glastonbury, CT: The Historical Society of Glastonbury, 1983.  
"Early Manufacturing at Curtisville." Retrospect, Number 10, February, 1948. Glastonbury CT: The Historical Society of Glastonbury.  
Historic Resource Survey. Historic Resource Consultants, 1990.  
Map: Baker & Tilden. Atlas of Hartford City and County. 1869.

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Glastonbury Historical Society

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 90

UTM References

A	1 8	6 0 7 5 9 0	4 6 2 1 0 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 8	6 9 8 6 7 0	4 6 2 1 0 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 8	6 9 8 2 0 0	4 6 2 1 2 8 0
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D	1 8	6 9 8 6 4 0	4 6 2 0 7 2 0
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E 1 8 6 9 8 1 1 0 4 6 2 0 5 9 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are shown on the attached district map, drawn to scale from Glastonbury Tax Assessor's maps (original scale 1" = 100'), located in the Town Hall, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were established to include the maximum number of contributing resources in the historic village first known as Curtisville, later Naubuc or District #1, on the historic maps of the region, and to exclude modern development to the extent possible, while still preserving the physical integrity and continuity of the district.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By** Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 4/28/92

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

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The industrial potential of Salmon Brook, which had provided waterpower for saw and colonial grist and sawmills, was first recognized by Oswin Welles, who manufactured wooden ware there until about 1846. He also ran a cigar factory on or near the site of the present industrial complex. Frederick and Joseph S. Curtis, brothers from Hartford, built an extensive factory for the manufacture of German silver products, including flatware, hollowware, and spectacles. They maintained an office in Hartford but lived in the district; Frederick in a house at the western end of the village, which he may have remodeled in the Greek Revival style; Joseph, a skilled silversmith, in a similar house of that style at the eastern end where he continued to live even after the company failed (Inventory #s 59, 94).

An oil painting of the village has survived (Exhibit A). It was executed about 1855 by James Rabbeth, Jr., a London-born artist who married a local Glastonbury girl.<sup>1</sup> Titled Curtisville, which tends to confirm the historic name of the village, it is a panoramic birdseye view of the area looking north from Naubuc Avenue to include Pratt Street, revealing the extent of industrial and residential development at that time. To the extreme left of the painting the Connecticut River with ships under sail is depicted, demonstrating the continued importance of the maritime trade. The relatively treeless landscape has an ordered quality, enhanced by the primitive style of the artist, which clearly conveys the romantic mid-century belief in the beneficence of industry. Depicted are fenced-in kitchen gardens and small areas under cultivation behind the houses. Apparently the larger farms were on the perimeter of the village. Some of the existing houses on both streets are recognizable, and include workers' houses on Naubuc Avenue on either side of the factory entrance, each with its own privy at the rear of the lot, as well as several of the larger extant colonial houses on Pratt Street.

The focal point of the painting is the factory complex, consisting of several large buildings with attached and detached sheds, suggesting that, quite typically for this period, the various industrial processes were carried out in separate buildings. It is known that one of the larger factory buildings was used for the plating process, accomplished by the use of a series of large batteries to electroplate the silver on baser metals, principally German silver, an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel. Another building may have housed the rolling department which had been installed by this time. In the first years of operation, the alloy had to be hauled by wagon to Waterbury for this process.

The Curtis Company, like most industry of the period, was undercapitalized and by 1860 was insolvent. It was reorganized by Thomas Vail, who continued the manufacture of Britannia ware and silverplated products. Vail also took over the former Frederick Curtis House on Naubuc Avenue (Inventory #59). With the advent of the Civil war, he reorganized the firm as the Connecticut Arms and Manufacturing Company. It was noted for the production of rifles as well as a single-shot pistol. By 1869 the company's assets were valued at \$88,000, which included, in addition to the factory buildings, 13

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dwellings and a store. The houses included the former Curtis workers' housing and at least three boarding houses and several late Greek Revival-style houses constructed during the war (Inventory #s 33, 37, 38, 44). The company also built the mill agent's house next to the factory (Inventory #77). A return to peacetime production of metal products after the war failed to save the company from bankruptcy in 1869.

Briefly known for a period as the American Silver Company, the firm was bought out in the early 1880s by James B. and William Williams, brothers connected with the family that owned the famous Williams Soap Company in Glastonbury. The success of their new firm, known as the Williams Brothers Silverware Company, can be measured by its longevity. It remained in business until after World War II, employing about 100 workers, most of whom lived in the area. The tenements and other company-owned workers' houses continued to be rented by employees but some boarded at homes in the area, including those of Hannah Williams and John Alford (Inventory #s 55, 57). One of the skilled workers, Joseph Parker, laid out new streets, Parker Terrace and its extension, and built large duplexes which he rented out to fellow employees (Inventory #s 63, 64). William Meyers, the company's shipping clerk, built a modest house west of the factory about 1890 (Inventory #51).

By the late nineteenth century the community contained a representative mix of occupations. Although industry was the largest employer, commercial farming, river-based commercial operations, and a few trades prospered. Tobacco barns in the district are remnants of the thriving tobacco farms that were successful from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. Several fine houses were built by men associated with this agricultural specialty (Inventory #s 27, 14). Commercial gardens, later known as "truck gardens," were another mainstay of the economy, fostered in part by the ready availability of river transport. Barges and steamboats made regular stops at the Pratt Street wharves, carrying freight and passengers. John Hale of Curtisville, a leader in commercial gardening, also had tobacco fields and orchards in the area. He promoted the building of the Grange Hall in the district (Inventory #9) and helped found the Connecticut Agricultural School at Storrs, now the University of Connecticut.

Many of those who plied their trade on the river lived in the district. George Sellew, a merchant shipper, lived at the west end of Naubuc Avenue; a relative, Sidney Sellew, was a mariner, who, with his family, shared the Risley duplex on the eastern end of Pratt Street (Inventory #s 60, 84). Philo Phelps, who had a store in the district and lived in his father's house near Main Street, was a coaster and continued to run the family coaling dock (Inventory #s 115, 14). Another store was run by Joseph Sellew, a bootmaker (Inventory #100).

Although the railroad never came to Glastonbury, local land transport was provided when the trolley line was established on nearby Main Street. By the 1930s automobiles were in common use, as evidenced by the number of garages built in the district in this period, and trucking had largely replaced river transport. The local fire department kept its trucks in a garage on Naubuc Avenue (Inventory #52) until it moved to Main Street and occupied what had been the district school for the village.



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Architectural Significance

Despite the presence of some modern residential intrusion, the variety of residential architecture in the district clearly conveys a sense of historical development. The historic functional diversity and exceptional temporal range of the district are evident in the many types of buildings and a variety of styles and forms not often found in an industrial village.

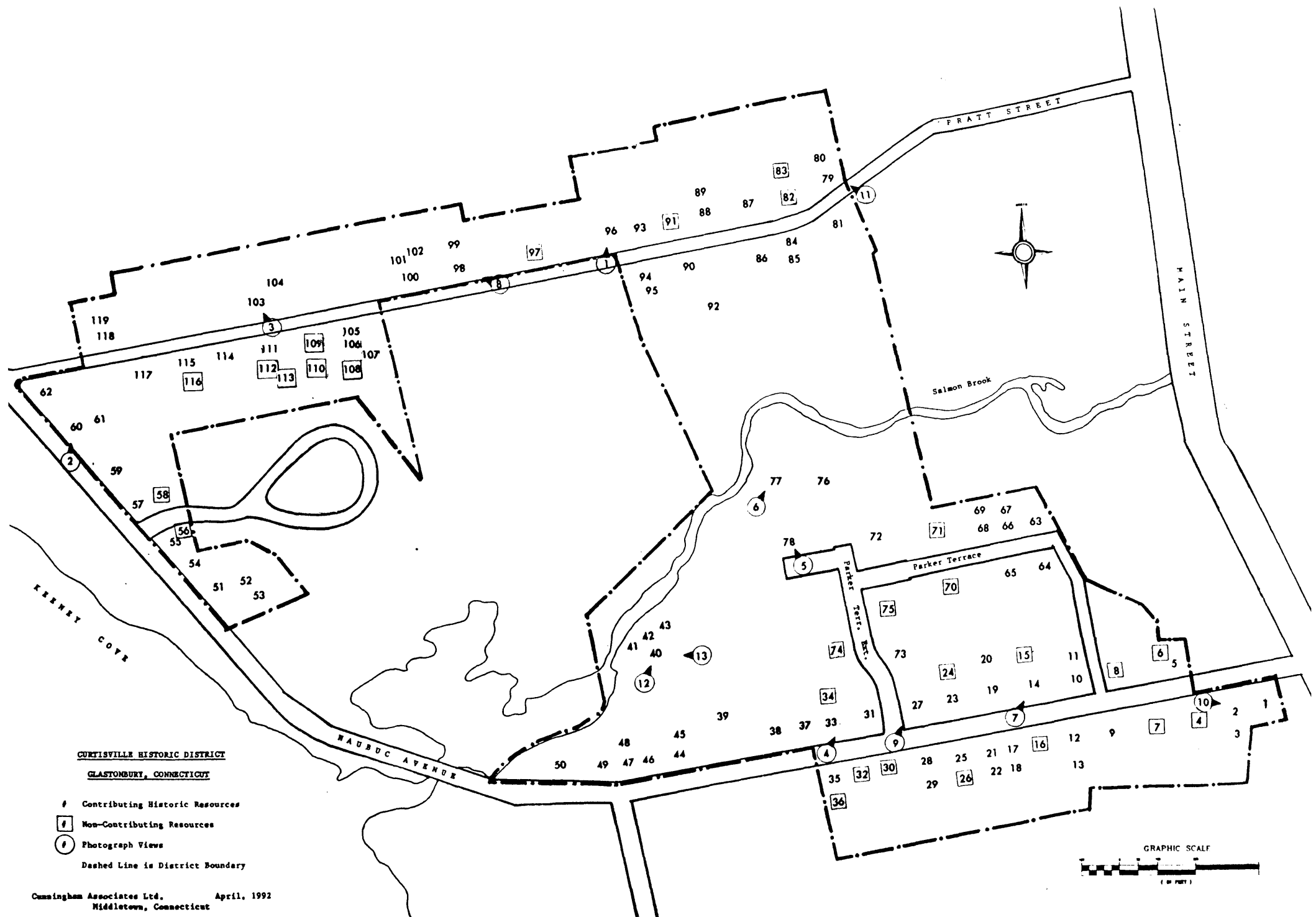
Some of the architectural variety was produced by the survival of local farming, even after Curtisville became an industrial village. Although there are no mansions of company owners, continued agrarian prosperity produced a number of fine stylish houses which have been preserved or restored, and raise the level of significance of the district. The Italianate house built by the Welles family, one of the most recent examples of restoration, is a distinctive version of this style which is enhanced by generous stylistic detail (Inventory #27). Others like the Colonial Revival duplexes on Parker Terrace and Naubuc Avenue and the Sherman D. Risley Four Square on Pratt Street are also exceptionally well-preserved and maintained and make a considerable contribution to the streetscape (Inventory #s 1, 2, 63, 79). Another highlight of individual significance is the well-preserved Carpenter Gothic cottage built by the Connecticut Arms Company, an unusual style for a house built by industry.

The district also contains a notable body of workers' housing. Many of these are well-maintained and often have their original sidings, as do a number of the more modest private homes of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The latter group, although generally simply vernacular interpretations of period styles, extend the generally middle-class range of the district. They are often embellished with porches or other Victorian detail.

Although some of the historic houses have inappropriate sidings or minor alterations, they all still convey their period associations. None of the contributing houses have lost their basic form, and several have retained fine stylish doorways; some, such as the Federal portico at 96-98 Pratt Street, rival those found in the historic district on Glastonbury's Main Street (Inventory #96). In some cases, the removal of earlier types of synthetic sidings would more clearly reveal fine details around windows and doors, such as are found on the Benjamin Hale House, which also is distinguished by a Greek Revival-style doorway (Inventory #103).

Endnote:

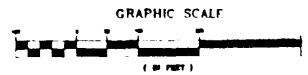
1. James Rabbeth, Jr, "Curtisville," Collection of the Connecticut Historical Society, c. 1855, reproduced in Retrospect: A publication of the Glastonbury Historical Society, No. 10. February, 1948. Another charcoal and pastel drawing depicting just the factory has survived. It was drawn by Richard Ritcher about the same time but it is less informative. The later artifact is in the collection of the Glastonbury Historical Society.



**CURTISVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
**GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT**

- / Contributing Historic Resources
- ⌘ Non-Contributing Resources
- ⊙ Photograph Views
- - - Dashed Line is District Boundary

Cunningham Associates Ltd. April, 1992  
 Middletown, Connecticut



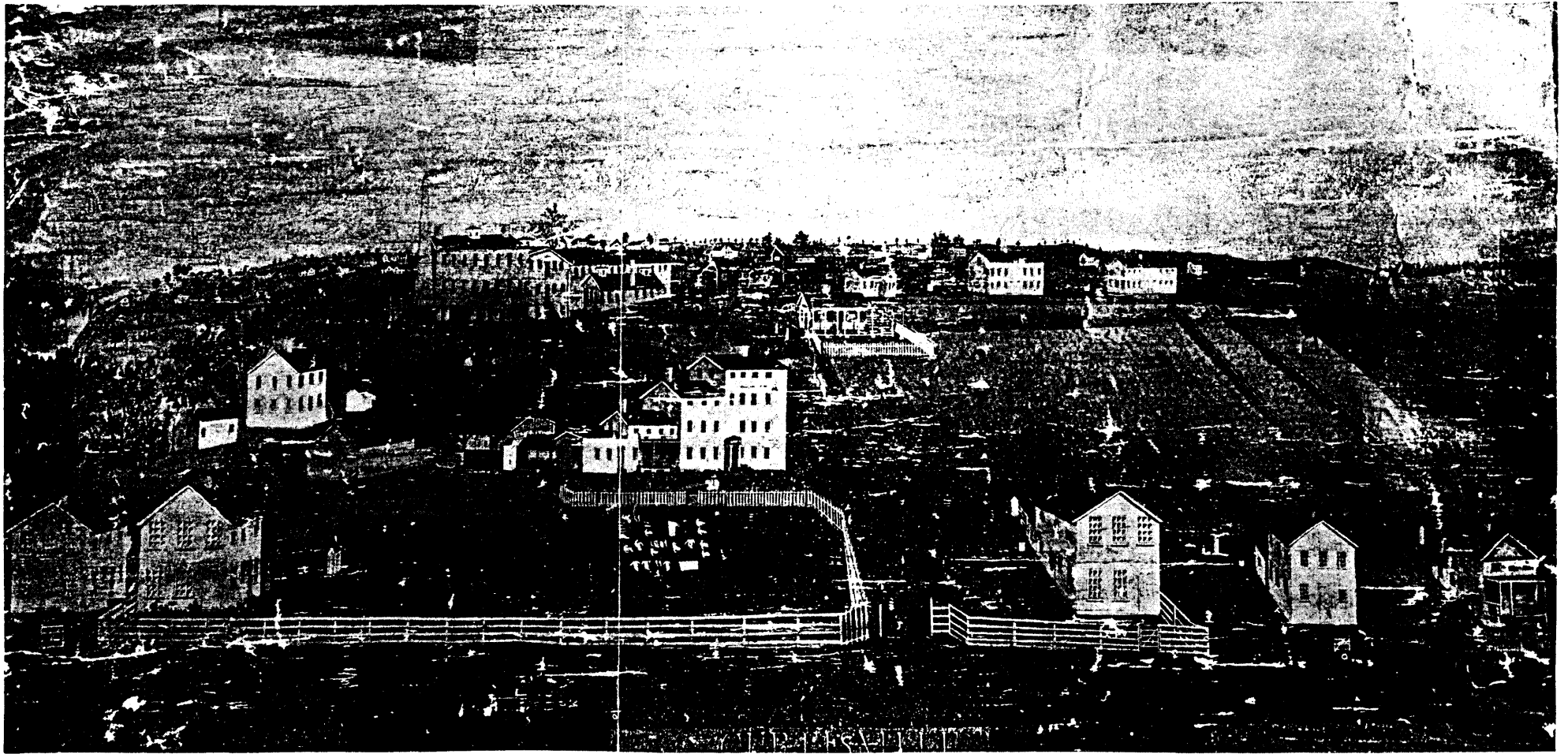


EXHIBIT A: Curtisville (oil on canvas)  
James Rabbeth, c. 1855  
(32½ x 65¼ inches)

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Curtisville Historic District, Glastonbury, Connecticut

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List of Photographs

Property: Curtisville Historic District, Glastonbury, Connecticut

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 4/92

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. 96-98 Pratt Street Facing: N
2. Albert Bogue House  
298-300 Naubuc Avenue Facing: N
3. Benjamin Hale House  
184 Pratt Street Facing: NW
4. Connecticut Arms Company House/ Curtis Company House  
98, 92 Naubuc Avenue Facing: NE
5. Mill Agent's House  
62 Parker Terrace Extension Facing: NW
6. Connecticut Arms Company Tenement  
56-58 Parker Street Extension Facing: NE
7. Alfred E. Phelps House  
56-58 Naubuc Avenue Facing: NE
8. John Sellew House and Store  
130, 138 Pratt Street Facing: NW
9. Welles House  
82 Naubuc Avenue Facing: NE
10. Richard Wooldridge Houses  
11-13, 17-19 Naubuc Avenue Facing: SE
11. Sherman D. Risley House  
48 Pratt Street Facing: NW