

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

9 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18/	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

for Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Starr-Fisk House Historic: Jeremiah Wetmore House
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 108-110 Washington Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Walter D. Briggs, trustee PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Residence Historic: same
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain _____ no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Colonial-Georgian DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1752-1756
addition 1756-87
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> clapboard	_____ asbestos siding	_____ brick
_____ wood shingle	_____ asphalt siding	_____ fieldstone
_____ board & batten	_____ stucco	_____ cobblestone
_____ aluminum siding	_____ concrete: type: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cut stone: type: <u>brownstone</u>
_____ other: _____		<u>foundation</u>
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 wood frame: post and beam _____ balloon
 load bearing masonry _____ structural iron or steel
 other: _____
- 10. ROOF: type:
 gable _____ flat _____ mansard _____ monitor _____ sawtooth
 gambrel _____ shed _____ hip _____ round _____ other _____
material:
 wood shingle _____ roll asphalt _____ tin _____ slate
 asphalt shingle _____ built up _____ tile _____ other: _____
- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 1/2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 56'x31' (all 36'x16')
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: _____ excellent _____ good fair _____ deteriorated
Exterior: _____ excellent _____ good fair _____ deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site _____ moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Large late 19th C. addition northwest; later doors and entrance porches
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn _____ shed _____ garage _____ other landscape features or buildings: large protected yard in rear
 carriage house _____ shop _____ garden _____
- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
 open land _____ woodland residential _____ scattered buildings visible from site
 commercial _____ industrial _____ rural high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This house is located in downtown Middletown near the busy intersection of Washington Street (Route 66) and Main Street. It is the easternmost of a row of residences (some converted to commercial use) on the west side of the street. A large parking lot slated for development is directly to the east, and a municipal parking lot is directly across the street.

17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior).

Survival of original interior finish, including paneling, triple-run staircase, and corner cupboard

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____ Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house consists of an original five-bay central-chimney structure built by Jeremiah Wetmore, Jr. between 1752 and 1756, and a three bay eastern section to the east, probably added by Jehosopht Starr before 1787.

The house was built upon part of two acres of the homelot of the Reverend Samuel Stow, given to his daughter Rachel and her husband Izrakiah Wetmore in 1704. Samuel Stow, a native of Roxbury, Mass., was one of the original Middletown proprietors (1651) and the town's first minister. The sons of Izrakiah and Rachel Wetmore - Seth, Caleb, Jeremiah, and James - were all prominent figures in 18th century Middletown. The two acres were divided among them in 1746.

In 1750 and 1751 Jeremiah Wetmore, Jr., son of Jeremiah Wetmore, Sr., and a grandson of Izrakiah, consolidated the piece of land upon which the house now stands from this division. He erected the fivebay house here by 1756. Jeremiah Wetmore was particularly notable for his activities in Middletown's Episcopal Church; his uncle, James, was the first preacher there.

The house was sold to Jehosopht Starr in 1756. Starr was active in the Revolution, and (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Wayne Svec
date: 1/78 view: southeast
negative on file: Roll 10



COMPILED BY:

name: Barbara Ann Cleary date: 3/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown Probate Records; Middletown City Directories; History of Middlesex County (J.H. Beers Co., 1884); Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County (Chicago:1903);

Albert Van Dusen, "Middletown and the American Revolution" (Middletown:1950); 1825 Barnum Map; 1877 Walling Map; Jessie Alsop, Colonial Dames Report (1940); "Jehosopht Starr House,"

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS: FERA Report (1935); Connecticut Historical Commission Survey (1967)

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

none known highways vandalism developers other: _____
 renewal private deterioration zoning explanation: The house is located in a downtown area and thus subject to development pressures. The plan of the trustees of the Fisk estate is presently unknown.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Form number: 18 Date: 3/78

Jeremiah Wetmore House
108-110 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

is reported to have been taken prisoner by the British in Long Island during the war. Starr, whose family included fourteen children, was probably responsible for the three bay addition to the east of the original house. He clearly conveys the house in two sections to his son, Jehosophat Starr, Jr., in 1786 and 1787.

The second Jehosophat Starr lived in the house until his death in 1814: his wife remained until her death in 1845. Jehosophat Starr was active in early manufacturing in Middletown. He owned or had an interest in a paper mill, "Munitions Manufactory," nail factory, carding mill, soap house, and bake house. He was not, apparently, very successful, as indicated by the insolvency of his estate at the time of his death.

The house remained in use as a residence in the early nineteenth century for the Bacon family (John L. Bacon, owner 1853-75; and Morris Bacon, owner/occupant 1875-1909). After 1909 the house was the home of John L. Fisk, an important civic leader of Middletown, and mayor of the city from 1912 to 1914. The house remained in the hands of the Fisk family until a few years ago.

The original five bay section has a central-chimney plan and Georgian decorative exterior features. The three bay addition to the east, on a slightly lower foundation, is similar to the original section in proportions and detail, such as the boldly molded window caps. Identical entrance porches were added to each section in the mid or late nineteenth century, further integrating the complex. A large ell (late nineteenth century) attached to the rear west corner is said to have replaced a smaller earlier one.

The interior retains original fielded paneling on the fireplace walls of the major rooms, and dado paneling in other rooms, as well as a corner cupboard. The triple-run staircase has carved newel post and balusters and the stair hall is paneled. Much original hardware also survives.

This house, home of a number of Middletown's prominent families for over 200 years, has rich historical associations. Together with a number of other early houses scattered along Washington Street, it serves as a reminder of the street's early role as the major highway to the west from Middletown. The Starr-Fisk House is presently one of the best examples of an 18th century dwelling in downtown Middletown.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: _____ Date: 1/90

Jeremiah Wetmore House
108-110 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457

