

CT Trust Resource ID: 2396

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Jonathan Balch HouseOther Name(s) (Historic): Arthur Covey House/GreenacresStreet Address or Location: 76 Harmony Hill Rd., HarwintonTown/City: Harwinton

Village:

County: LitchfieldDesignation(s): SRHD, NRHDOwner(s): Jason and Sarah UrsoPublic/Private: PrivateLatitude: 41.7816 Longitude: -73.0499

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Residential: single-family dwellingHistoric Use: Residential: single-family dwellingAccessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? NoInterior accessible? If yes, explain: NAStyle of building: Colonial Date of Construction: c. 1790Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) ClapboardStructural Systems(s): Wood FrameRoof(Type): Gable (Material): Asphalt ShingleNumber of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions: 32' x 38'Structural Condition: GoodExterior Condition: GoodLocational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NAAlterations?: No If yes, explain: NARelated outbuildings or landscape features: Barn, Shed, studioSurrounding Environment: Rural

Interrelationship of building and surroundings: This property consists of 2.27 acres of land on the east side of Harmony Hill Road. The property is to the north of the intersection of Harmony Hill Road and Burlington Road (Rt. 4). The driveway extends to the east off the road and terminates to the north of the house (in front of the garage). The house sits close to the road, buffered by trees. To the east of the house is a barn with a sundial on the west elevation. Attached to the northeast corner of the house, and extending to the east, is a garage and a small barn. Coniferous and deciduous trees are found throughout the property. To the northeast and southeast are open fields. Surrounding the property are nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century single-family dwellings. This house is a contributing resource within the boundaries of the Burlington-Harmony Hill Roads National Register Historic District.

Other notable features of building or site: This house was built c. 1790 and measures 32' x 38'. It is a two-story, side-gable, five-bay house with an ell on the northeast corner. It is covered in clapboard siding with asphalt shingles on the roof. A brick chimney protrudes from the center of the ridge line of the roof. The façade faces west and the main entry is located on this side. It is reached by stone steps and has a protective gable-roof overhang over the door. Fenestration includes twelve-over-eight double-hung windows and six-over-four double-hung windows flanking the main entry.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

Arthur Sinclair Covey was born in 1877 in Illinois to Byron and Emeline Edwards Covey. Although he was born in Illinois, he grew up in Kansas and Missouri. In 1895-1896 Covey attended Southwestern College in Kansas. Afterwards he studied for three years at the Chicago Art Institute under Frank Duveneck, and graduated in 1899. During the early twentieth century, from 1900-1901, Arthur Covey became a staff artist and art editor at Indianapolis Press and Cleveland Plain Dealer. A year later, he taught at the Chicago Art Institute and set up his own studio until 1904 when he traveled to Germany to attend the Royal Academy in Munich. There he studied under Karl Marr. Covey became an assistant to the British mural painter, Frank Brangwyn, from 1905-1908. During this time he also taught at the London School of Art. When he returned to New York City in 1908, he married Mary Dorothea Sale with whom he had two children: Margaret Sale Covey and Laird Fortune Covey.

In 1916, Arthur Covey completed his first commission which was to paint murals for the Wichita Library in Kansas. A year later, Covey's wife, Mary, died. In 1921, Covey married children's book author and illustrator, Lois Lenski. Shortly after Lenski and Covey's son, Stephen Covey, was born in 1929, they moved to Harwinton, Connecticut. From 1929-1942 Covey taught at the National Academy Schools in New York. In the 1950s, the Coveys moved to Florida where Arthur Covey died ten years later in 1960. Some of Covey's accomplishments include receiving a medal of honor from the Architectural League in 1925 for the murals he painted for Kohler Company, becoming President of the National Mural Painters Society from 1926-1929, creating the "pierced brass on redwood murals for the exterior of Contemporary Arts Building at the New York World's Fair" from 1938-1939, and decorating the dome and globe of the Land Plane Building at La Guardia Airport in 1939 (Archives of American Art 2016).

Lois Lenski was born in 1893 to Richard Charles Henry Lenski and Marietta "Mary" Young. She was one of five children and grew up in a small town in rural Ohio. Her experiences as a child would later become an inspiration in the children's books she wrote and illustrated. In 1915, Lenski graduated from Ohio State University where she received an education degree. While there, she took many art classes and served as the art editor of the university yearbook. After she graduated, she continued her art training at Art Students League in New York and at Westminster Art School in London. It was in London where she began her career as an illustrator, illustrating three books for publisher John Lane.

Lois Lenski returned to the United States in 1921 and married Arthur Covey, who she met in New York City. In 1929 their son, Stephen Covey, was born and the family moved to Harwinton, Connecticut. Lenski illustrated books for other authors until 1927 when she wrote and illustrated her own children's book, "Skipping Village." A year later she wrote and illustrated another children's book, "A Little Girl of 1900." Both books were based on Lenski's childhood experiences of growing up in a small rural community. Her first historical fiction book written for young adults was published in 1935 and was called, "Phebe Fairchild, Her Book." In 1942, Lenski received the Newbery Honor Award for "Indian Captive," a book that is still in print today. Her book, "Strawberry Girl," earned her the Newbery Medal in 1946. This book was about a rural farm family in Florida, and was part of the series Lenski called "Regionals." Lois Lenski often traveled the country and wrote young adult novels on families living in different parts of the United States. In the 1950s, the Coveys moved to Florida, where Arthur Covey died ten years later. In 1967, Lenski created the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation "with the goals of giving back to children, who gave her so much throughout her life and career" (The Lois

Sources:

Ransom, David F. Burlington-Harmony Hill Roads National Register Historic District Nomination. April 1996, National Park Services. Archives of American Art - http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/arthur-sinclair-covey-papers-7531/more#section_1 - accessed 1/12/2016. University of Southern Mississippi - http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/degrum/public_html/html/research/findaids/lenski.htm - accessed 1/12/2016. The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation - <http://www.loislenskicovey.org/> - accessed 1/12/2016. Ancestry.com - <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/12290430/person/13124885417/facts> - accessed 1/12/2016. Roger Plaskett - Municipal Historian for the Town of Harwinton

Photographer: Roger Plaskett **Date:** 12/2015

View:

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Form completed by: Kristen Nietering **Printed On:** January 13, 2016

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



West view, camera facing east

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____

District ☐ S ☐ NR **If NR, specify:** ☐ Actual ☐ Potential