

CT Trust Resource ID: 2464

## 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): Monroe Castle HouseOther Name(s) (Historic): William Styron House and StudioStreet Address or Location: 12 Rucum Rd., RoxburyTown/City: Roxbury

Village:

County: Litchfield

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Henry and Karen GlanternikPublic/Private: PrivateLatitude: 41.5353 Longitude: -73.2780

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Residential propertyHistoric Use: Residential propertyAccessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? YesInterior accessible? If yes, explain: NAStyle of building: Greek Revival Date of Construction: c. 1855, c. 1940Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) ClapboardStructural Systems(s): Wood FrameRoof(Type): Gable (Material): Asphalt ShingleNumber of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions: 50' x 30'Structural Condition: GoodExterior Condition: GoodLocational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NAAlterations?: Yes If yes, explain: Alterations presently ongoing to the house.Related outbuildings or landscape features: studio, BarnSurrounding Environment: Residential

**Interrelationship of building and surroundings:** The house is located on the south portion of the parcel, set back from the road. The studio is to the east of the house, sitting close to the road. A stonewall lines the south border of the property while trees surround the north, east, and west portions of the lot. A small building and pool are to the north of the house. A short driveway extends off the north of Rucum Road which runs east-west in the southeast portion of Roxbury. Rucum Road extends to the east off Route 67, which runs northwest-southeast through the town.

**Other notable features of building or site:** As noted by Jan Cunningham in Roxbury: A Historic and Architectural Resource Survey, "12 Rucum Road originally was a five-bay Greek Revival-style farmhouse that utilized the basic colonial form. Changes to the house since it was built include additions on either side and a large rear ell. The original five-bay façade also has been altered with the installation of an extensive one-story bay window on the right side that occupies two bays. The main door, recessed at the center of the original façade, has a Greek Revival surround capped by a projecting cornice, and the door itself is flanked by sidelights. Many of the windows contain 6-over-6 sash, appropriate to the period of the house."

The studio is a 1 ½-story, approximately 25' x 40,' c. 1940 gable-roof building. The ridge-line runs north-south, perpendicular to Rucum Road. The building is sheathed in clapboards and has asphalt shingles on the roof. The studio is situated close to the road, with the façade facing east.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

### Historical or Architectural importance:

William Styron was born in 1925 in Virginia. His father was a shipyard engineer and his mother passed away when Styron was only 13. He studied at Duke University after serving in the Marines during World War II. After receiving his degree, he moved to New York City where he worked at McGraw-Hill Publishing for a short time. After he was fired from his job, he devoted time to writing his first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness*, which was published in 1951 when Styron was just 26. The novel was well received and earned him the American Academy's Prix

de Rome. In 1953, Styron married Rose Burgunder, and for a short time they lived in New York City before purchasing an old farmstead in Roxbury, Connecticut. During the height of the Civil Rights Movement, he wrote *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. The novel was about a slave that starts a bloody and disastrous uprising in Virginia in 1831. At the time, even though this book became a best seller, it was also controversial. Many African Americans did not agree with Styron's portrayal of the slave and his slave owners. Styron wrote the novel in the studio on his Roxbury property. In 1979, *Sophie's Choice*, was published and three years later, it was made into a movie. During the 1980s, and throughout his life, Styron battled with depression. He wrote *Darkness Visible*, which was published in 1990, about his battle with the illness. Throughout the 1990s, Styron continued to write and became a spokesperson for mental illness. His health began to decline in the early 2000s, and he died in 2006 at the age of 81.

**Sources:**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/02/books/02styron.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/02/books/02styron.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), Cunningham, Jan; Roxbury: A Historic and Architectural Resource Survey; Cunningham Associates Ltd., Middletown, Connecticut, 1996-1997, Altschuler, Glenn C.; National Public Radio; 'Reading My Father:' Growing Up With William Styron; April 28, 2011; accessed 9/17/2014 at <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/14/135709848/reading-my-father-growing-up-with-william-styron>, Styron, Alexandra; The New Yorker; Reading My Father A writer's triumphs and his torments; December 10, 2007; accessed 9/17/2014 at <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/12/10/reading-my-father>

**Photographer:** Kristen Nietering **Date:** April 2014

**View:**

**Form completed by:** Printed On: February 23, 2016

**Organization:** Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

**Address:** 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

**Threats:** None known

**Subsequent field evaluations:**



West and south elevations of the house. Camera facing northeast.

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**FOR OFFICE USE:**

**Town #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Site#** \_\_\_\_\_ **UTM** \_\_\_\_\_

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