

CT Trust Resource ID: 4162

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): Matthew Josephson House, Bennett Pickett House

Other Name(s) (Historic): Matthew Josephson House/Bennett Pickett House

Street Address or Location: 34 Church Rd., Sherman

Town/City: Sherman

Village:

County: Fairfield

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Margery Josephson

Public/Private: Private

Latitude: 41.6110 Longitude: -73.4887

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Residential: single family dwelling

Historic Use: Residential: single family dwelling

Accessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? Yes

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Colonial Date of Construction: 18th century

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Clapboard

Structural Systems(s): Wood Frame

Roof(Type): Gable (Material): Asphalt Shingle

Number of Stories: 1 1/2 Approximate Dimensions: 28' x 28'

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: Yes If yes, explain: Additions added throughout time. Large windows added in 19th century.

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Barn, Shed

Surrounding Environment: Woodland

Interrelationship of building and surroundings: This property consists of 50.70 acres on the east side of Church Road. The house is set back from the street and is partially obscured from view by trees. A large garage and guest house is just to the south of the house. To the south of the garage/guest house is what used to be Matthew Josephson's studio but is now used as a shed. The property is surrounded by nineteenth and twentieth century single family dwellings as well as open spaces and wooded areas.

Other notable features of building or site: This Colonial style house was built in the late eighteenth century. It is a one and a half story, side-gable house with a wrap-around porch. The dwelling is sheathed in clapboard siding and has 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 found on this side. It is reached by wooden steps with no railing and is protected from the elements by the shed-style roof of the porch. Square columns support the porch roof. To the north of the door are two nine-over-nine sash windows with shutters. Other fenestration includes six-over-six double-hung windows and three-pane rectangular windows in the upper story.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

Matthew Josephson was born in New York in 1899 to Julius and Sarah Josephson. In 1920 he married Hannah Geffen in New York City, and they moved to Paris shortly after. While in Paris, he was associate editor of "Broom" magazine from 1922-1924. After moving back to the United States in the late 1920s, Josephson became an editor of Paris-based magazine, "transition." In 1929, he purchased the house in Sherman, Connecticut, which became his permanent home during the 1930s and 1940s. While residing in Connecticut, he maintained an apartment in New York City. Josephson wrote his first book in the 1920s, a biography on Emile Zola called, "Zola and His Time: The History of His Martial Career in Letters." It was published in 1928. In the 1940s, he wrote biographies on Victor Hugo and Stendhal. He is most known for his book, "The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists, 1861-1901" which was published in 1934. Later in life, Josephson wrote "The Money Lords: The Great Finance Capitalists, 1925-1950" which was published in 1972. While living in Connecticut, Josephson had a studio on his property. It was first in the house that is still standing, and then was moved to a small outbuilding on his property. The building that housed his studio is still standing. When Josephson purchased the property, it was a 100 acre farm called "Twin Willows Farm," and he

purchased it from an old local family. Matthew Josephson died in California in 1978. After his death, the property passed to his two sons.

Sources:

Interview with Margery Josephson – May 22, 2015; <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Matthew-Josephson>; www.ancestry.com; The Sherman Sentinel, "The Sentinel Houses: Sherman, Connecticut," The Sherman Sentinel, 1978.

Photographer: Kristen Nietering **Date:** 5/22/2015

View:

Form completed by: Kristen Nietering **Printed On:** May 16, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Southwest view of the house, camera facing northeast.

FOR OFFICE USE:

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

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