

CT Trust Resource ID: 2456

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): Palmer, Capt. Amos; Whistler, Anna McNeill; Benet, Steven Vincent, House

Other Name(s) (Historic): Palmer, Capt. Amos, House/ Whistler, Anna Matilda McNeill, House/ Benet, Steven Vincent, House

Street Address or Location: 24 Main Street, Stonington

Town/City: Stonington Village: Stonington County: New London Designation(s): SRHD, NRHD
Borough

Owner(s): Houston, Alice W. Public/Private: Private

Latitude: 41.3324 Longitude: -71.9060

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Domestic: single dwelling

Historic Use: Domestic: single dwelling

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

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Colonial / Federal Date of Construction: 1787

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

Structural Systems(s): Load bearing masonry, Post & Beam

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

Number of Stories: 2 1/2 Approximate Dimensions: 32' x 40'

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: No If yes, explain: NA

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Shed

Surrounding Environment: Residential, Residential, Residential

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

This property is a .1-acre parcel located on the northwest corner of Main Street and Wall Street, in Stonington Borough, a picturesque maritime village set on a narrow, 170-acre peninsula in the southeastern corner of Connecticut near the Rhode Island border. The house is a contributing resource in the Stonington Borough Historic District (listed in 1978).

Other notable features of building or site:

The building is a center-chimney house with the traditional Colonial massing, but with Federal-style entry and window details. It has a side-gable roof; the façade faces east toward Main Street. The house is raised on a tall parged stone foundation, with a walk-out basement level accessible on the Wall Street side. On the façade, a double curved stone stair has paired flights of steps down to grade from a first-floor landing at the center entryway. A half-story height fieldstone retaining wall along the street frontage creates a terraced front yard. A door under the landing may also access the basement. The entry has a door and transom with pilasters, frieze, and cornice above. The windows flanking the entry are twelve-over-twelve sash with simple projecting cornices. Siding is narrow wood clapboards with wide corner trim forming simple pilasters the full height, terminating in eave moldings and a small cornice return.

Architect: Palmer, Captain Amos Builder/Maker: Palmer, Captain Amos

Historical or Architectural importance:

The house has a long history, first built by Captain Amos Palmer in 1878 to replace a house that had burned. Later the house was hit by cannon fire in the War of 1812. From 1837 to 1840, the house was occupied by Anna Matilda McNeill Whistler. Her husband, the engineer Major George Washington Whistler, was working on the Providence to Stonington railroad. Their son, the artist James McNeill Whistler, was a child at the time.

Poet Stephen Vincent Benet (1898-1943) lived here in the twentieth century. Benet bought the house in 1940 and it was owned by his three

children after his death in 1943 until 1965. Benet is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Stonington.

Stephen Vincent Benét was born July 22, 1898, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, into a military family. Benét's siblings, William Rose and Laura, also became writers. Benét attended Yale University where he published his first two collections of poetry. Following a year's interruption for military service (non-combat), Benet graduated from Yale in 1919, submitting his third volume of poems in place of a thesis. He published his first novel, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, in 1921. A Guggenheim fellowship enabled Benet to travel to France in the 1920s and during that time he married writer Rosemary Carr (1898-1962). While there he wrote 'John Brown's Body', which was published in 1928.

Benét was successful in many different literary forms, which included novels, short stories, screenplays, radio broadcasts, and opera libretto. His most famous work is the long poem 'John Brown's Body' for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1929. From 1933-1942, Benet served as the judge for the Yale Series of Younger Poets prize; the Series is the oldest annual literary award in the United States. At the age of 44, Benét suffered a heart attack and died in New York City.

Sources:

Town of Stonington Tax Assessor's Records. Accessed at: <http://gis.stonington-ct.gov/> .

Benet, Stephen Vincent, biography. Academy of American Poets. Accessed at: <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/stephen-vincent-ben%C3%A9t> .

Lehman, Eric D. and Amy Nawrocki. 2014 *Literary Connecticut*. Charleston: The History Press.

Palmer, Captain Amos, House. 2008. *Historic Buildings of Connecticut*. Accessed at: <http://historicbuildingsct.com/?p=1193> .

WPA Architectural Survey: Stonington historic building 026. Accessed at:

<http://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4005coll7/id/6137/rec/23> .

Zimmerman, Sarah J. 1978. Stonington Borough National Register Historic District No. 08000497. National Park Service.

Photographer: WPA Survey Date: c. 1935

View: Southeast view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock Printed On: May 25, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



24 Main St., Stonington - Captain Amos Palmer - SE view

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ Site# _____ UTM _____
 District ☐ S ☐ NR If NR, specify: ☐ Actual ☐ Potential