

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

STOWE, HARRIET BEECHER, HOUSE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Stowe, Harriet Beecher, House

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 73 Forest Street

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Hartford

Vicinity: N/A

State: CT

County: Hartford

Code: 003

Zip Code: 06105

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MID-19TH CENTURY: Gothic Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Brick, Stone

Walls: Brick

Roof: Slate

Other:

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Summary Statement of Significance.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion as the longtime home of author Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896). After a relatively peripatetic life, moving from Connecticut to Ohio to Maine to Massachusetts and traveling with great frequency to promote her work, Stowe returned to Connecticut to settle down for her final years in 1873; she lived at this house until her death in 1896. Here in Connecticut, Stowe continued her career as a social reformer, becoming engaged with a variety of ongoing national debates, most significantly the national debate over polygamy. Stowe's involvement in this debate reflected the same concerns as her involvement in the debate over slavery. In fact, Stowe's views on polygamy were so closely tied to her concerns about slavery that understanding her role in the polygamy debate provides a greater understanding of Stowe as a multi-dimensional social reformer who was shaped by both her own deep religious convictions as well as Victorian notions of female purity and the sacred nature of motherhood.¹

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House is a grey-painted, brick Gothic Revival cottage with a slate roof on a tree-filled lot. The building presents a clear picture of what life for literary icon, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was like in Hartford's artistic enclave Nook Farm during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The well-preserved and well-restored building provides a clear example of how Stowe lived out the last years of her career and life.

The house is located on the western edge of Hartford, Connecticut. The house was one of two constructed by Franklin Chamberlin in 1871. Chamberlin occupied the house until he sold it to Harriet Beecher Stowe in January 1873. The building remained in Stowe's possession until her death in 1896, at which point the building was sold out of the family. It was reacquired by Stowe's grandniece, Katherine Seymour Day, in 1924. In 1965 the house, along with an adjacent property and partial ownership of another property in Hartford, was given to the Day Memorial Library and Historical Foundation (the precursor of the building's current owner, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center).

The house at 73 Forest Street was built in a mid-nineteenth century community known as Nook Farm, which used and enhanced the area's setting above the Park River to create a pleasant pastoral landscape. While much of Nook Farm is no longer recognizable, the Stowe house sits in a quiet part of an otherwise busy neighborhood of large turn of the century houses and modern infill buildings. The house is sheltered in what Katherine Seymour Day called the "literary lawn," with an open lot (now parking for the Stowe Center) to the south, the Chamberlin-Day House (1884) to the north, and the Mark Twain House (1874)(NHL, 1962) to the west.² The house sits behind a post-and-rail fence that is consistent with historic fences in the neighborhood and the building's lot is filled with plantings that are appropriate to a house of this era, with special attention paid to those plants associated with Harriet Beecher Stowe and her writings.³

The house is situated with its façade (east) facing Forest Street and located in the middle of what was historically a 75x150 foot lot. The building is constructed of brick and sits on a brick (above grade) and fieldstone (below grade) foundation. On the east, north, and south elevations the brick portion of the foundation is parged and scored to look like ashlar stone. The house has a roughly square footprint, which is enlivened with projecting bays on two sides and porches on all four sides. It sits under a complex slate roof that combines a peaked roof, with a jerkinhead roof parallel to the street, and a hipped roof at the rear. The roof is punctuated

¹ Cindy Weinstein, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 6.

² Past Designs, "Historic Landscape Report: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, CT," Collections of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 84-85.

³ *Ibid.*, 154 and 164.

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with dormers and bargeboards on all elevations. The two brick chimneys are each capped with a pair of terracotta chimney pots.

The main living spaces, on the first two floors of the house, are arranged around a central stair hall, while the attic rooms are arrayed around a central space without the stairs. Access to this attic space is via a rear stair. The cellar is a large space with a single enclosed room at the north end and a crawl space under the south porch.

Exterior

The south, west, and north elevations of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House are the same length, while the east elevation has been extended by a projecting bay on the north side of the building. The south elevation has a full-length porch added to it, with the center section enclosed. This porch wraps around to the midpoint of the west elevation of the building. The other half of the west elevation contains a two-story bay window. The north elevation is similarly bifurcated, with a porch on one side and a projecting bay, with two-story bay window, on the other. The house is painted light grey with olive-grey trim.

East Elevation

The building's main facade (east), is bilaterally symmetrical. The main entry and portico are at the center of the first floor. The portico has three parts. The center section is sheltered by a gable roof with a decorative truss at its peak and supported by turned posts on plinths. This central section is flanked by uncovered sections. These have turned posts with ball finials at the corners linked by three rails with offset verticals (three between the upper and middle rails and four between the middle and lower rails). The porch is reached by two wooden steps. Flanking the entryway are single two-over-two double hung windows with stone lintels and sills. Three windows matching those on the ground floor are positioned across the second floor in line with the ground floor openings. A series of eight scrollwork brackets run across the top of the wall. Three dormers at the attic level are in line with the openings on the first and second floors. These three dormers are composed of a large central wall dormer with pierced, scallop-edged bargeboards and a small gothic-arch window flanked by smaller gable-roofed dormers with flanking scrolls and pierced decorative cornices. All the windows have shutters.

South Elevation

The south elevation has little of the symmetry of the east elevation. The ground floor is dominated by a porch that runs from just short of the eastern corner of the building to a point past the western end of the house. The porch is covered by a hipped roof with a low pitch and is in three distinct parts. On the eastern end is an open section with a rail that matches the front porch railing, a chamfered post at the southeastern corner, and diagonal braces running from the post and walls up to the beams supporting the roof. A tall two-over-four, double-hung window, running from the floor nearly to the ceiling and serving as access to the porch, is located on the main block of the house at the eastern end of the porch. Its trim matches that of the other windows in the house. The central section of the porch has been enclosed and sheathed in flushboard siding. It contains two, two-over-two double-hung windows. The western section of the porch is enclosed by lattice-work panels.

The second floor has a two-over-two, double-hung window at each end of the building with a blank expanse of wall in between. The overhanging roof is supported on scrollwork brackets that match those elsewhere on the exterior of the house. At the attic level, the elevation is divided almost in half. The eastern end has a wall dormer with a clipped gable, bargeboards, and a two-over-two window. The western end is the roof of the rear portion of the house with a centered gabled dormer, matching those on the eastern elevation. All of the windows on this elevation have shutters, except those in the enclosed portion of the porch.

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West Elevation

The west, or rear, elevation has two parts. At the ground level, the southern half contains an open porch with two doors at the southern end of the porch and a window at the northern end of the porch. This window is the only one in this elevation that does not have shutters. The southern door opens into the enclosed portion of the porch on the southern side of the house and the northern door provides access to the main block of the house. The porch is a continuation of the southern porch, with a matching low-pitched hipped roof and chamfered posts. On the south end of the second floor, a window is located above the ground floor window. At the attic level a single dormer is roughly centered in the roof. The overhanging roof is supported on scrollwork brackets that match those elsewhere on the exterior of the house. The northern half of the west elevation is dominated by a two-story bay window sitting under a clipped roof gable. The bay window has a central two-over-two window flanked by one-over-one windows in the angled sides, all sitting above a paneled band. The windows sit under a plain frieze and a slightly concave roof that steps back to the slightly smaller second level of the bay window. This upper level mimics the windows of the ground floor section but in slightly smaller scale. The whole assembly is capped by decorative ironwork. Above the bay is a gable whose window and bargeboards match those of the southern gable on the main block.

North Elevation

Like the west elevation, the north elevation is divided into two parts. The western end has a small porch under a small convex mansard roof supported on chamfered square posts with diagonal braces. Under the porch roof, two six light windows run from the porch floor to the underside of the roof, with one on the wall to the west of the porch and one on the wall to the east. Above the porch is a two-over-two, double-hung window with a stone lintel and sill that match those elsewhere on the house. The cornice matches that on the eaves throughout the house. Above the western side of the elevation sits a one-over-one dormer that matches those elsewhere in the house. The eastern end of the elevation is made up of a two-story bay window underneath a jerkinhead gable with bargeboards. It is a close match to the bay window on the west elevation of the house.

Interior

There are six main rooms on the ground floor of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. The main entry door leads to the front hall; all the other rooms on this floor, except the pantry, open off of this hall. With the exception of the kitchen and pantry all the rooms on this floor have elaborate plaster cornices and carpet covered floors. The doors on this floor and throughout the house have four flat panels and hardware from the period of construction.

The Front Hall

As the central circulation space in the house, the front hall is dominated by stairs and doors. A straight run of stairs, with a slight flair at the bottom three steps, occupies the south wall. Five doors (in addition to the entry) open into the room. There are two doors on the east wall; the one on the north leads into the front parlor and the one on the south leads into the dining room. A door under the stairs in the south wall also leads into the dining room. The west wall has a door that leads directly into the rear parlor. Also on the west wall is a short hallway that leads into the kitchen.

Dining Room

The dining room is located in the southeastern corner of the house. It is a roughly square room, with doors in the southwest, northwest, and northeast corners. In addition, there is a window centered on the east wall and one located at the eastern end of the south wall. The window in the south wall functions as a door onto the eastern end of the south porch.

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Rear Parlor

The rear parlor is an elongated octagon located in the northwest corner of the house. The east wall has two openings, one door leading to the center hall and a pair of sliding doors leading into the front parlor. On either side of the bay window in the west wall there is a single window and a fourth window in the north wall serves as a door to the north porch. The fireplace, with a marbled slate surround, is centered on the south wall. Built-in shelving is located on the angled interior walls of the room.

Front Parlor

The front parlor is located in the northeast corner of the house. It is a square room with a three-sided projection in the center of the north wall opposite a marbled slate fireplace in the south wall. A single window is located on either side of the projecting bay. A window is located at the north end of the west wall and another is centered on the east wall. Sliding doors leading to the back parlor are located at the southern end of the west wall and a door to the center hall is located at the eastern end of the south wall.

Kitchen

The kitchen is a rectangular room located in the southwest corner of the house. It contains four doors. One, in the south wall, leads to the pantry. The one in the west wall leads to the back porch. Two are located in the east wall: one leading to the space between the kitchen and center hall, and one opening to the cellar stairs. There is a window in the western end of the south wall and a window in the northern end of the west wall.

Pantry

The pantry is a narrow, rectangular enclosed space in the center of the south porch. It has three doors in its north wall: the east one leading into the dining room, the west one leading into the kitchen, and the central one leading to the back stairs up to the second floor. It also has an exterior door on its west wall leading to the western end of the south porch.

Second Floor

Like the first floor, the second floor is arranged around the central stair hall. The woodwork is quite similar to that on the first floor, but the crown moldings are far smaller and simpler. The southwest space, occupied by the kitchen on the ground floor, is split on this level between a bathroom and small bedroom.

Front Hall

The front hall is the central space on the second floor. The front stairs run up to the southwest corner of the hall, where they meet the rear stairs (which are reached via a door in the south wall). Doors in the hall open into the twins' room (the east end of the south wall), the back stairs (the west end of the south wall), the back hall (the south end of the west wall), Harriet's chamber (the north end of the west wall), and Calvin's later room.

Twins' Room (Dining Room Chamber)

The twins' room is a square room in the southeast corner of the house, over the dining room. One door, opening into the front hall, is located at the east end of the north wall. There are two windows, one in the center of the east wall and one at the east end of the south wall.

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*Bathing Room*⁴

The bathing room, located at the southwest corner of the house, is a small rectangular room. A single door at the south end of the east wall allows access to the room; a single window is located near the middle of the south wall.

Calvin's Later Room (Front Parlor Chamber)

The front parlor chamber is a rectangular room located in the northeast corner of the house. There is a door into the short hall to the rear parlor chamber (near the center of the west wall), a door into the front hall (west end of the south wall) and a door for a closet in the southeast corner of the room. Windows are located in the west and east walls and a bay window is centered in the north wall.

Harriet's Chamber (Rear Parlor Chamber)

Harriet's chamber is a roughly octagonal room in the northwest corner of the house. The octagon is created by angled walls filling the northeast and southeast corners of the room and a bay window centered in the west wall. There are three windows in the bay and a fourth window in the north wall. The room has a door into Calvin's room (in the southwest corner), a door into a hall which leads past a closet to the front parlor chamber (in the northeast corner), and a door into the front hall (in the southeast corner). A fireplace is centered between the door in the south wall and the angled southeast corner.

Calvin's Original Room (Chamber)

This small rectangular room is the middle of three rooms located along the west wall of the house. It has two doors, one into the rear hall, and one into Harriet's chamber. A single window is located just north of the midline of the west wall.

Rear Hall

The rear hall allows access to the rear stairs, the bathing room in the southwest corner of the house, and one of the doors to the room occupied by Calvin when the Stowes moved into the house. The hall is entered by an awkward space with an angled wall that reflects the octagonal shape of Harriet's room. The narrow proportions of the hallway indicate its functional status in the plan of the building, and emphasize the ascetic nature of Calvin's original space in the house.

Rear Stairs

The rear stairs occupy a small sliver of space between the west wall of the twins' room and the rear hall.

Attic

The attic has six major rooms. The stairs to the attic end just off of a large central space that corresponds with the front hall. Off of this hall is a large room in the southeast corner, corresponding to the dining room; a room in the southwest corner corresponding to the kitchen; a room in the northwest corner corresponding to the rear parlor; and a room in the northeast corner corresponding to the front parlor. In addition to these rooms, there is a small room at the east end of the central hall. Unlike the ground floor rooms, the rooms in the attic are all essentially rectangular. The northwest and northeast rooms have closets; there is access to a small crawl space from the north side of the northeast room's closet. All of the rooms except the central hall have exterior walls that slope, following the line of the roof. The wooden trim and doors are consistent with those elsewhere in the house; there are no crown moldings of any type on this level.

⁴ A sketch plan of the house drawn by Harriet Beecher Stowe calls this room the "Bathing Room." (Myron Stachiw, Thomas Paske, and Susan L. Buck, "Historic Structures Report for the Harriet Beecher Stowe House," Collections of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Fig. 15).

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Cellar

The cellar is a single large space that follows the footprint of the house and runs under the south porch. A small powder room is located to the north of the stairs and a square room is located just north of the rear chimney. The rest of the space is open.

The Restoration

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House underwent a careful, well-documented restoration from 1965-68. The goal of the work was to return the building to its appearance when Harriet Beecher Stowe was in residence from 1873-1896. Using photographs taken both inside and outside the house, a careful examination of physical evidence including a closely related house in Hartford, and a close reading of published and unpublished resources, Joseph S. Van Why, Director of the Stowe House and Stowe-Day Library (as the site was then known) at the time of the restoration; William Lamson Warren, a respected antiquarian and Director of the Stowe-Day Foundation during the restoration; and architect Norris Prentice, led a restoration campaign that resulted in the resource that exists today.⁵

On the exterior, this restoration required the following work: reconstructing original trim; closing several windows on the second floor (which lit bathrooms that had been added in the 1920s); a new roof and flashing; replacing the brick south porch with a wooden one; reconstructing the north porch; and reconstructing the front portico.⁶

As with the exterior of the house, the interior also underwent a thoroughly researched, extensive restoration at the same time. Restoration work inside included the following: stripping the interior, revealing “doorways, corner cupboards, Gothic bookcases, molded plaster cornices, colored fireplaces;” restoring plaster throughout the house; a new plaster cornice on the first floor; removing the front stair to the third floor; rebuilding the rear stair to the third floor to the configuration that it had during the last period of private ownership (1927-1964); installing mantels and bookcases from a “twin house” on Collins Street in Hartford; recreating the kitchen based on Catharine Beecher’s philosophies; replacing French doors in the dining room with original openings and recreating the original opening to the pantry; recreating the pantry; re-excavating the cellar beneath the south porch; and returning interior room arrangements and passages on the first and second floors to their Harriet Beecher Stowe period configurations.⁷

During the restoration, Van Why, Warren and others also uncovered a number of physical clues to the early appearance of the house. This allowed door openings to be returned to earlier locations, details like the plaster cornice in the parlors to be restored, and wall papers to be recreated.⁸

Joseph Van Why felt especially lucky to have located another house in Hartford which he suggested was a close match to the Stowe House. Known as the Erastus Collins house, the building is reported to have been built as a copy of the Stowe House for someone who had once rented Stowe’s house while Stowe and her family were staying in Mandarin, Florida over the winter.⁹ It is in many ways a quite similar to the Stowe House. It shared the Stowe House’s general shape and size, with a centrally-located door in a three-bay façade, a porch in one gable and a two-story bay window in the other gable, as well as roof dormers flanking a central wall dormer. Even more striking were the interior similarities, such as the Gothic-arch bookcases in the front parlor, similar arrangements of doors in the rear parlor and the arrangement of the second floor landing. Van Why was so

⁵ J. S. Van Why, “The Harriet Beecher Stowe House: Historical Background and Documentation,” typescript in the collections of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

⁶ Stachiw [n.p.] Appendix XVI, “Summary of Alterations.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ J. S. Van Why, “The Harriet Beecher Stowe House,” 4-5; Stachiw; Records of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

⁹ J. S. Van Why, “The Harriet Beecher Stowe House,” 3.

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confident of the similarities between the houses that he imported elements from the Collins House (which happened to be slated for razing at the same time the Stowe House was being restored) to replace elements that had been removed from the Stowe House.

Seven photographs have been located over the years that show Stowe at the house. These have proved invaluable both for the restoration of the building and its furnishing as a house museum. The recreation of elements of the house, such as the Gothic arched bookcases in the front parlor, details of carpets and wallpapers, or the identification and arrangement of furniture were all aided by these contemporary photographs.¹⁰

Other documentary evidence also allowed for the Stowe era to be recreated more accurately. Stowe described (and sketched) the arrangement of rooms in the house and her hopes for decorating and furnishing it in three letters to her daughters and friends.¹¹ Her niece and several friends and acquaintances also documented the appearance of the house during Stowe's lifetime.¹² Five published descriptions of the house provided further information for the restoration.¹³ Because of all of this evidence, the Historic Structures Report undertaken in 2001 found few discrepancies between the 1965-68 restoration and evidence uncovered during the writing of the report.¹⁴

It is not just the building that reinforces the link to Stowe; the building is furnished with objects that would be familiar to Harriet Beecher Stowe. Paintings she collected in Europe at the height of her fame, those she painted herself, a Cumberworth bronze acquired because it reminded her of Sojourner Truth, and personal artifacts are all part of the Stowe House collection. Uncle Tom's Cabin memorabilia, Stowe's paint boxes, dolls belonging to Stowe's daughters, ceramics described in Stowe's work or designed by her, and presentation pieces given to the famous author are also exhibited.¹⁵ Of the 720 major objects listed in the museum's most recent inventory, 124 have a provenance that links them to Harriet Beecher Stowe.¹⁶ Additional objects have a connection to relatives of Stowe. Additional elements, like the wallpaper in the front hall and the carpet in the back parlor, were reproduced based on information gathered during the restoration. Taken together, the building and its contents clearly evoke Harriet Beecher Stowe and her time in the house.

¹⁰ J. S. Van Why, "The Harriet Beecher Stowe House," 4.

¹¹ Manuscript Letter, Harriet Beecher Stowe to twin daughters Harriet Beecher Stowe and Eliza Tyler Stowe, Dec. 23, 1872; Manuscript Letter, Harriet Beecher Stowe to twin daughters Harriet Beecher Stowe and Eliza Tyler Stowe, May, 1873; Manuscript Letter, Harriet Beecher Stowe to Mrs. Mariah Collins Strong and Miss Mary Collins, Oct. 29, 1876;

¹² Unknown author, manuscript "Some Recollections of Mrs. Stowe's Life at home on Forest Street," n.d.; Miss Katharine S. Day, untitled typescript recollections of Stowe's time in the house, 1938; Mrs. J. Francis Saunders, "Recollections of Harriet Beecher Stowe," 1937.

¹³ Alexandra van Gripenburg, *A Half Year in the New World*, (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, 1954 reprint); Frances Smith, "Mrs. Stowe's Home Life," *Drake's Magazine*, Aug. 1889; Rev. Joseph H. Twitchell, "H.B. Stowe in Hartford," *Authors at Home* (NY: A. Wessels Co., 1902); George W. Cooke, "Harriet Beecher Stowe," *New England Magazine*, Sept., 1896; James Briton II, "Black and White Impressions of Hartford Architecture," *Hartford Times*, March 18, 1937.

¹⁴ Stachiw, "Historic Structures Report for the Harriet Beecher Stowe House [2001]," 80-95.

¹⁵ Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, "National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant[April, 2012]," in the files of Elizabeth Giard Burgess, Collections Manager, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center; Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, "Stowe House Inventory Current 2012," in the files of Elizabeth Giard Burgess, Collections Manager, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

¹⁶ Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, "Stowe House Inventory Current 2012," in the files of Elizabeth Giard Burgess, Collections Manager, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 2 as the longtime home of author Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896). After a relatively peripatetic life, moving from Connecticut to Ohio to Maine to Massachusetts and traveling with great frequency to promote her work, Stowe returned to Connecticut to settle down for her final years in 1873; she lived at this house until her death in 1896. Here in Connecticut, Stowe continued her career as a social reformer, becoming engaged with a variety of ongoing national debates, most significantly the national debate over polygamy. Stowe's involvement in this debate reflected the same concerns as her involvement in the debate over slavery. In fact, Stowe's views on polygamy were so closely tied to her concerns about slavery that understanding her role in the polygamy debate provides a greater understanding of Stowe as a multi-dimensional social reformer who was shaped by both her own deep religious convictions as well as Victorian notions of female purity and the sacred nature of motherhood.¹⁷

Best known for writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe rose to fame by championing the downtrodden. "One of the most popular and well-paid authors of the nineteenth century,"¹⁸ Stowe was known for her "commitment to realism, and her serious narrative use of local dialect...predated works like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* by 30 years, and influenced later regionalist writers including Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman."¹⁹ Throughout her career, Stowe promoted various social causes, primarily through her novels but also through her speaking engagements which took her across the country.

The daughter of a Congregational minister from Litchfield, Connecticut, Stowe was raised in a family which included several nationally prominent social reformers. Reflecting her parents' enlightened views on female education, Stowe was educated in all-female academies that fostered erudition and independence. This education influenced her views of social change and justice, while shaping her literary career. Using a style of writing honed during her time in Cincinnati and described by her biographers as "parlor literature," Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote one of the most controversial and influential books of the nineteenth century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But while modern audiences know her for this antislavery work, Stowe was widely recognized in her lifetime as a highly prolific and nationally significant reformer for a variety of causes above and beyond abolition. This nomination recognizes Stowe's more mature career as a reformer on issues relating to the family and women's roles.

Seven buildings are closely associated with the life of Stowe. One of these, the house she occupied in Brunswick, Maine while writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is already a National Historic Landmark (designated in 1962). The house in Hartford is associated with Stowe's mature career. It was here that Stowe wrote *Pogonuc People* (1878) -- a book that in many ways brought her career back to its beginnings by focusing on the people of her early childhood. More importantly, it was from this house that Stowe continued her work as a social reformer, advocating for those who suffered from what she called "the sorrows and oppressions of" polygamy.²⁰ This is also the house in which she lived for the longest period of time, and it is the best preserved of all of the houses in which she lived. Restored and furnished to reflect her life there, this house reflects Stowe's life like no other building associated with her. The period of significance for this house coincides with the period in which Stowe lived here.

¹⁷ Cindy Weinstein, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 6.

¹⁸ Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), vii, 143.

¹⁹ Mary Mark Ockerbloom, ed., "A Celebration of Women," <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/stowe/StoweHB.html>.

²⁰ Harriet Beecher Stowe, Preface, Mrs. T. B. H. Stenhouse, *Tell It All: The Story of a Life's Experience in Mormonism* (Hartford, Connecticut: A. D. Worthington, 1875), 2.

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Early Life

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in the Congregational parsonage in Litchfield, Connecticut on June 14, 1811. She was the seventh child of Lyman and Roxanna Beecher. After her mother's death in 1816, she spent time with her grandmother, Roxana Foote, and her unmarried aunt, Harriet Foote, in Guilford, Connecticut. She returned to Litchfield at some point in 1817, the same year she started school. Stowe would return to Guilford periodically for the next two decades. She entered the Litchfield Female Academy in 1819, and remained there until 1824.

In September of 1824, Stowe traveled from Litchfield to Hartford to continue her education at the Hartford Female Seminary. Her sister, Catharine Beecher, had started there just a year and a half earlier. Stowe spent the next three years immersing herself in her education and then returned in the fall of 1827 as a teacher. Her time at the Hartford Female Seminary as both a student and teacher instilled in her a fierce sense of independence that ultimately led her to be the sole provider for her family. She remained at the Hartford Female Seminary until the fall of 1832; that year, Stowe accompanied her father to Cincinnati, where he had been appointed President of the Lane Seminary. While in Cincinnati, Stowe began her writing career and there she was introduced to Calvin Stowe, who became her husband.

Stowe's first foray into publication was a book for children, *Primary Geography for Children, on an Improved Plan with Eleven Maps and Numerous Engravings*. This book led to an invitation for both Stowe (and her sister Catharine, who was credited as a co-author) to join the Semi-Colon Club. This club was a literary group, with many transplanted New Englanders like the Beechers. Stowe's experiences in this club led her to perfect the style of "parlor literature" that she would return to throughout her career. This type of literature was "written for entertainment, instruction, and amusement [and] meant to be read aloud." According to Hedrick:

these domestic literary productions were an integral part of polite society in antebellum America and were as accessible to women as to men. Before literature split into "high" and "low" forms in the 1850s and 60s, best selling novels were extensions of parlor literature.²¹

Because parlor literature was an arena where a well-educated and independent woman could excel without violating the social rules of the day, this genre was central to Stowe's early success.

Just two years after moving to Ohio, Stowe began to experience success; that year, a story that she wrote for the Semi-Colon Club, "A New England Sketch," won a \$50 prize from *The Western Monthly Magazine*. Publication of other stories soon followed. A collection of Stowe's pieces for the Semi-Colon Club were subsequently gathered together and published in 1843 under the title *The Mayflower*.

Calvin Stowe, a well-known biblical scholar and Professor at the Lane Seminary, was a member of the Semi-Colon Club and he attended meetings with his then wife, Eliza Tyler Stowe. In August, 1834, an outbreak of cholera swept through the Lane Seminary, infecting students and faculty. Eliza Stowe's death during this epidemic left Stowe a widower.

Less than a year later, Calvin Stowe and Harriet Beecher were married. As erudite and well educated as his wife, Calvin provided encouragement mixed with exhortation when needed:

You have it in your power, by means of that little magazine [the *Souvenir*] to form the mind of the West for the coming generation. It is just as I told you in my first letter, God has written it in

²¹ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, viii.

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his book, that you must be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God? You must make all you calculations to spend the rest of your days with your pen.²²

As a teacher, Calvin Stowe received a limited salary, which ironically provided his wife with an incentive (perhaps even a need) to pursue writing for financial gain.

The Stowes remained in Cincinnati for the next 14 years, with Calvin continuing to teach and Harriet continuing her writing career. In 1850, Calvin Stowe accepted a job at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, where he had been educated and where he had held his first teaching position.

Brunswick Maine/Uncle Tom's Cabin

During their two years in Brunswick, Maine, Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the book that "catapulted her to international fame" and made her "one of America's best-paid and most-sought-after writers."²³ A work that had begun as a short serial to denounce the evils of slavery, and was intended to be "only three or four numbers," grew into more than forty installments in the *National Era*. The popularity of the work led to its publication as a novel and it led, of course, Abraham Lincoln to famously say to Stowe when he met her in 1862, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!" The work was so successful, that in the words of Stowe biographer Joan Hedrick:

[it] was not only translated into foreign tongues...[but also] transmuted into song, theater, statuary, toys, games, handkerchiefs, wallpapers, plates, spoons, candlesticks, and every form of kitsch that the commercial mind could imagine – a phenomenon that puts it on the level of the Davy Crockett fad of the 1950s or the Ninja Turtle craze of the 1980's.²⁴

Andover

Just two years after receiving the position at Bowdoin, Calvin Beecher was offered the chair of sacred literature at Andover Theological Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts. The family moved into a stone building in the town that had been renovated using the first proceeds from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe continued her writing, publishing six books and countless articles during their eleven years in Andover.

Calvin's decision in 1861 to retire led his wife to become, "[f]or the next sixteen years...the sole breadwinner, the head of the household, and a very determined professional writer."²⁵ While Stowe had already written the book that would assure her fame long after her death, the practical requirements of supporting a household demanded that she continue to write productively. She chose to do this in Hartford and, for a period, during winters in Florida.

Nook Farm

After Calvin retired, the Stowes chose to move to Hartford. They decided to settle in an area of the city known as Nook Farm. Nook Farm was a mid-nineteenth century development that began in 1853 when John Hooker

²² Calvin Stowe to Harriet Beecher Stowe, May 19, 1842. Quoted in Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 140.

²³ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, vii.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

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and his law partner (and brother-in-law) Francis Gillette purchased 140 acres of farmland that lay just outside the western edge of the city.²⁶ As described in the Historic Structures Report for the Stowe House:

The residential community which developed became the home to a number of nationally and internationally-prominent writers and social activists during the last half of the nineteenth century. During much of this period the community was remarkably close-knit, united by bonds of family, friendship, and intellectual affinity.²⁷

It was, in other words, a perfect place for Harriet Beecher Stowe, who by this time was an international literary celebrity known for her social activism in support of abolition and women's rights. Added to that, she was entangled in the social web that underlay the community. In *Some Reminiscences of a Long Life*, long-time resident John Hooker (and the builder of the first house in the neighborhood) wrote:

There was a curious thread of relationship running through our little neighborhood...Mr. Gillette and I were the first settlers, and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Gillette was my sister. Soon after Came Thomas C. Perkin, an eminent lawyer of the city, whose wife [Mary Beecher] was sister of my wife. Then Came Mrs. Stowe [in 1864], another sister, who at first built a house on another part of the farm, but subsequently came to live closer by us on Forest Street. My widowed mother early built herself a cottage next to my own house, Elizabeth, daughter of my sister Mrs. Gillette, married George H. Warner, and she and her husband settled close by us. Next came Charles Dudley Warner and his brilliant wife [Susan Lee], he being the brother of George H. Warner just mentioned. Joseph R. Hawley, then my law partner, but since a general in the [Civil] war and senator in Congress, met at my house, and afterwards married, Harriet W. Foote, a cousin of my wife.²⁸

Stowe's family connection to the community likely led to their becoming investors in the development long before they moved there. In 1854, flush with money from the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Stowes had loaned \$3700 to Hooker and Gillette. The money was repaid over the next three years, with Calvin claiming his right to various tracts in the development as Hooker and Gillette repaid the loan.²⁹

The community, especially in its earliest days, was influenced by the prevailing architectural tastes of the day, primarily the work of Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux.³⁰ The result was a park-like development with natural landscape elements highlighted or, in some cases, created. Samuel Clemens, the writer known as Mark Twain, described the neighborhood in 1868 as:

Being composed almost entirely of dwelling houses – not shingle-shaped affairs, stood on end and packed together like a “deck” of cards, but massive private hotels, scattered along broad straight streets, from fifty all the way up to two hundred yards apart. Each house sits in the midst of about an acre of green grass, or flower beds, or ornamental shrubbery, guarded on all sides by the trimmed hedges of arbor-vitae, and by files of forest trees that cast a shadow like a thundercloud.³¹

²⁶ The land was annexed by the city several years after Hooker and Gillette purchased it. John Hooker, *Some Reminiscences of a Long Life* (Hartford: Bellknap & Warfield, 1899), 170. Stachiw, “Historic Structures Report for the Harriet Beecher Stowe House [2001].” 5.

²⁷ Stachiw, “Historic Structures Report for the Harriet Beecher Stowe House [2001].” 7.

²⁸ John Hooker, *Some Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 171.

²⁹ Past Designs, “Historic Landscape Report,” 9.

³⁰ Stachiw, “Historic Structures Report for the Harriet Beecher Stowe House [2001].” 7.

³¹ Kenneth Richmond Andrews, *Nook Farm, Mark Twain's Hartford Circle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950),

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It was this sylvan setting that drew the Stowes to Hartford.

The Anti-Polygamy Campaign:

In the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation, women abolitionists turned their attention to a variety of new causes. Foremost among these was the emergence of a nationwide opposition to polygamy. Calling polygamy, “a slavery which debases and degrades woman, motherhood, and family,” Harriet Beecher Stowe was at the forefront of what became a national debate about polygamy, the nature of marriage, the future of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and the rights of women.³²

For Stowe, as for many other women, the debate over polygamy was a natural outgrowth of the debate over slavery. In fact, even before slavery had been eradicated, the newly formed Republican Party had “argued in their platform of 1856 that it was ‘both the right and imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the territories those twin relics of barbarism---Polygamy and Slavery.’”³³ The debate over polygamy that emerged in the 1850s reflected many of the same concerns about the family as other nineteenth-century reform movements as well as growing concerns about the use of Federal power to regulate religious beliefs. This debate also played a crucial role in Utah’s entry into the Union, which occurred in 1896, only after polygamy had been outlawed. As such, it played a central role in shaping American society.

According to Mormon belief, Joseph Smith received a revelation about polygamy sometime in the 1830s, shortly after he founded the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints. Although Smith probably married his second wife in the 1830s, he presented his revelation privately only to select Church leaders in Nauvoo, Illinois. Concerned about the response Mormons and non-Mormons would have to polygamy, church “leaders married additional wives in secret and attempted to destroy rumors that the Church leaders observed the law of polygamy” throughout the 1840s.³⁴ However, in 1852, Brigham Young, Smith’s successor, publicly sanctioned the practice of polygamy.

Insisting that “our system of marriage promotes life, purity, innocence, vitality, health, increase, and longevity while [monogamy] engenders disease, disappointment, misery, and premature death,” the Mormons, under Brigham Young, adopted a public and uncompromising position on polygamy.³⁵ Mormon leaders “held out [polygamy] as an improving reform” in line with other similar reform movements of the nineteenth century, all of which were intended to strengthen the family.³⁶ Among the Mormons themselves, “belief in the institution [of polygamy] became a touchstone of loyalty to one’s religion, especially as the anti-polygamy crusade intensified.”³⁷

88.

³² Harriet Beecher Stowe, Preface, Mrs. T.B.H. Stenhouse, *Tell It All: The Story of a Life’s Experience in Mormonism*, (Hartford, Connecticut: A. D. Worthington, 1875), 2.

³³ Quoted in Charles A. Cannon, “The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 1 (February 1974): 61; See also, Newell G. Bringhurst, “The Mormons and Slavery: A Closer Look,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 50, no. 3 (August 1981): 334.

³⁴ Jessie L. Embry, “Effects of Polygamy on Mormon Women,” *Frontiers* 7, no. 3 (1984): 57.

³⁵ “Discourse by President Joseph F. Smith,” *Deseret News*, 24 February 1883, quoted in Carmon Hardy and Dan Erickson, “‘Regeneration Now and Evermore!’ Mormon Polygamy and the Physical Rehabilitation of Humankind,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (January 2001): 55.

³⁶ See for example, Carmon Hardy and Dan Erickson, “‘Regeneration Now and Evermore!’ Mormon Polygamy and the Physical Rehabilitation of Humankind,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (January 2001): 61.

³⁷ Joan Smyth Iversen, “A Debate on the American Home: The Antipolygamy Controversy, 1880-1890,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 4 (1991): 588.

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Between 1852, when the Mormons publicly admitted to practicing polygamy, and 1890, when polygamy was formally abolished, opposition to polygamy intensified across the United States, with innumerable tracts, books, sermons, and magazine articles focusing attention on the problem of “plural marriage.” Opposition to polygamy sprang from many different causes, among them a simple opposition to the Mormon religion. However, at the heart of this opposition was the concern that “the very existence of polygamy demonstrated that monogamy was not the inevitable form of family life.”³⁸ Polygamy, opponents argued, debased a woman’s proper role within the family and Mormon women in polygamous relationships were not simply compared to slaves, they were described *as* slaves living under the tyrannical control of their husbands. Rescue homes were set up to “aid our suffering sisters in Utah” and anti-polygamous women formed an important alliance with women associated with the national temperance movement.³⁹

After the Civil War, opponents of polygamy pointed to the success abolitionists had had in ending slavery, seeing in that struggle a model for their own battle against polygamy. Views of polygamy as slavery led many opponents of this practice to see Harriet Beecher Stowe as an important potential ally. Stowe, who saw clear parallels between what she called “the sorrows and oppressions of” polygamy and slavery, quickly took up the cause. In 1875, while living in Hartford, she wrote the preface to *Tell It All: The Story of a Life’s Experience in Mormonism*, the autobiography of Fanny Stenhouse, an English woman who became a partner in a “plural marriage.” A best seller, Stenhouse’s story became an important weapon in the battle against polygamy, in part because of the support of Stowe who was already widely viewed as a champion of the oppressed.⁴⁰

In 1879, anti-polygamist women in Utah founded and created the Anti-Polygamy Society. In April 1880, they published the first issue of the *Anti-Polygamy Standard*, a national newspaper. Reaching out to American women across the country, the founders and members of the Anti-Polygamy Society made a calculated decision to pull Stowe into the debate by having her write an appeal to the “Women of America.” This appeal appeared in the first issue of the paper, underscoring the connections between African slavery and Mormon polygamy. Stowe’s fame as the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* made her the perfect spokesperson for a cause that supporters saw as morally equivalent to abolitionism. Pointing out that “the attack on polygamy borrowed heavily from the polemical tactics used in the debate over slavery,” historians have argued that “it was no accident that Harriet Beecher Stowe endorsed the first issue of the *Anti-Polygamy Standard*.” Just as Stowe had used “the tactics of ‘domestic politics’ in the cause of abolition” so, too, did she now use a similar approach when attacking polygamy or what she called “this degrading bondage.”⁴¹

In many ways, Stowe’s role in the anti-polygamy debate reflected her long-held views regarding the need to protect female modesty and to promote the role of the wife and mother. In the very first pages of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe had underscored the horrors of slavery with a scene in which Haley, the slave trader, appraises Eliza as a “fine female article,” offering to buy her for the New Orleans market. Eliza’s famous flight across the ice was not simply a flight from slavery---it was also a flight to protect female virtue from the likes of Haley and the “New Orleans market.” Similarly, Eliza’s desire to protect her child, as well as Lucy’s suicide when her child is sold, reflected Stowe’s belief in the sacred nature of motherhood. Even Cassy’s shocking decision to kill her third child reflects this view of motherhood as sacred; Cassy’s decision is made to save this child from the tragedy of being separated from its mother and exposed to greater cruelties. This focus on motherhood was

³⁸ Charles A. Cannon, “The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, No. 1 (February 1974): 62.

³⁹ Joan Smyth Iversen, “A Debate on the American Home: The Antipolygamy Controversy, 1880-1890,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 4 (1991): 589.

⁴⁰ Harriet Beecher Stowe, Preface, Mrs. T.B.H. Stenhouse, *Tell It All: The Story of a Life’s Experience in Mormonism*, (Hartford, CT: A. D. Worthington, 1875), 2.

⁴¹ Joan Smyth Iversen, “A Debate on the American Home: The Antipolygamy Controversy, 1880-1890,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1991, vol. 1, no. 4, 592.

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not, however, limited to depictions of motherhood under attack; as scholars have noted, “happy families in Stowe’s novel are orchestrated by mothers.”⁴²

For Stowe, and for many female abolitionists, slavery’s evils were intrinsically linked to the damage the institution inflicted on not only the family but also on the institution of marriage itself. This was a theme Stowe pursued in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*; Mr. Shelby’s decision to sell Tom reveals the hypocrisy inherent in the practice of slavery which itself makes a mockery of the idea of marriage. In a parallel thread, Eliza discovers her husband, George, only by escaping to freedom. In 1869, just a year before she moved to Hartford, Stowe, following through on this, had published “The True Story of Lady Byron” in the September issue of *Atlantic Monthly* in the United States and *McMillan’s* in Britain. This work, which ignited a firestorm in both Britain and America, was re-written six months later and published as a book-length work titled *Lady Byron Vindicated*. In writing this work, Stowe argued that as “Lady Byron has an American name and an American existence, and reverence for pure womanhood is, we think, a national characteristic of the American,” her story deserved a fair telling in the American press.⁴³ Although highly romanticized and attacked by critics as contradictory for its depiction of women as both pure and corrupt, this work, which both exposed Byron’s incestuous relationship with his half-sister and set out to rehabilitate Byron’s wife by illustrating that she was the wronged party, illustrated Stowe’s deep belief in women’s innate purity.

Stowe’s participation in the debate over polygamy reflected these long-standing concerns about the importance and vulnerability of women, the family, and motherhood.⁴⁴ The escalation of the national debate over polygamy and the growing divide between its opponents and proponents exacerbated divisions among supporters and opponents of women’s suffrage. A significant contingent of Mormon women saw no contradiction between women’s rights and polygamy. Instead, they argued that because “men are not by nature monogamous...the ‘plural order’ offered delicacy, modesty, and refinement.”⁴⁵ Rather than disputing the double standard for sexual behavior commonly accepted in nineteenth-century America, these women argued instead that polygamy made men more responsible for their sexual behavior than monogamy as the practice of polygamy ensured that men married women with whom they had sexual relations.⁴⁶

While this view of polygamy was limited to Mormon women, not all advocates for women’s rights saw polygamous women as being beyond the pale or, even more simply, as symbols of female oppression. For many suffragists, the Utah legislature’s decision to give women the right to the vote in 1870 meant that Mormon Utah was at the forefront of women’s rights. The National Women’s Suffrage Association (NWSA), which had already embraced such controversial ideas as divorce, was willing to work with Mormon suffragists. However, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), in which Stowe played a prominent role, refused to approve an alliance with Mormon women. While the split between these two suffrage movements pre-dated Utah’s decision to give women the vote and was, therefore, not directly tied to this division among suffragists, disagreements over how to regard women engaged in polygamous relationships ensured that this division remained. It was not until 1890 when the Mormons publicly disavowed polygamy that these two suffrage groups united.

⁴² Cindy Weinstein, “Introduction,” *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 5.

⁴³ Harriet Beecher Stowe quoted in Jennifer Cognard-Black, “The Wild and Distracted Call for Proof: Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Lady Byron Vindicated* and the Rise of Professional Realism,” *Beyond Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Essays on the Writing of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, 55.

⁴⁴ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 353-379

⁴⁵ Joan Smyth Iversen, “A Debate on the American Home: The Antipolygamy Controversy, 1880-1890,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1991, vol. 1, no. 4, 596.

⁴⁶ Julie Dunfey, “‘Living the Principle’ of Plural Marriage: Mormon Women, Utopia, and Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century,” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 10, 1984, 530.

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Social Activism in Hartford

Stowe's social activism while living in Hartford was not limited solely to the national debate over polygamy. During her later career, she took up a variety of causes, ranging from the debate over the education of former slaves to the promotion of the progressive artistic ideas of the aesthetic movement.⁴⁷ Along with Elizabeth Colt, Olivia Clemens and other prominent Hartford women, Stowe established the Hartford Society of Decorative Arts. This later became part of the University of Hartford. Stowe continually contributed to Hartford fundraisers, once giving her personal poems to be auctioned off to raise funds for local organizations. She also supported animal rights movements, including Anti-Vivisection and the Connecticut Humane Society. Stowe also raised money for a school and church to be built for freed slaves near her summer home in Mandarin, Florida.⁴⁸

Oakholm

The Stowes' first house in Hartford was one that was built for them, to plans created by Octavius J. Jordan (with much input and supervision from Harriet Beecher Stowe). A lot along the Park River was purchased in 1860 and construction began in the fall of 1862.⁴⁹ By April, 1864 the Stowes had begun to move in to Oakholm, the elaborate Gothic cottage among the trees (complete with the "eight gables" that Harriet emphasized in a letter to James Fields).⁵⁰ The Stowes' arrival in Hartford, and the showcase house that Stowe herself created, was a topic of discussion in the local paper:

It is known that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the popular authoress, has purchased a tract of land on the banks of the Park river [sic], west of Sigourney Street, which leads directly to it. A carriage road will wind among the trees to the villa. The villa will be an additional beauty to our city and a worthy home for talent and taste.⁵¹

For the next nine years Harriet and Calvin called Oakholm home when they were not wintering in Florida, or on the road promoting Harriet's work. Harriet's continued writing was a necessity, as "much of the money that she had already earned from her writing went into building "Oakholm."⁵² Once completed, the grand house continued to be a drain on their finances. As early as 1867, the Stowes were complaining of the expense of running the house, seeking a way to remove "the great burden of that Hartford establishment ... from [their] shoulders."⁵³ By the beginning of the next decade:

the long winters in Florida, their changing roles from parents to grandparents, the continuing expense of Oakholm, and the encroaching factory district made Harriet and Calvin rethink the value of their Hartford home within their personal lives.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ See for example, Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Education of Freedmen," *The North American Review* 128, no. 271 (June 1879): 605-615.

⁴⁸ Files of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

⁴⁹ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 312-13.

⁵⁰ Past Designs, "Historic Landscape Report," 25; Hedrick, 311.

⁵¹ "The Home of an Authoress," *Hartford Times*, May 16, 1863 quoted in Past Designs, 23.

⁵² Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 311.

⁵³ Harriet Beecher Stowe to Charles Edward Stowe, March 11, [1868?], Beecher-Stowe Collection, Arthur E. and Eliza Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, quoted in Hedrick 384.

⁵⁴ Past Designs, "Historic Landscape Report," 38.

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The house was sold in 1871 to the Underwood Typewriter Company, which divided the house up into apartments for its workers, and used some of the grounds to expand its factory.⁵⁵ Calvin and Harriet would remain without a primary residence for two years before buying another house in Nook Farm.

Mandarin, Florida

From 1867 until 1882 Stowe wintered along the St. John River in Mandarin, Florida. The house provided a respite for the pair, especially during the tumultuous times that engulfed the Stowes when Henry Ward Beecher was embroiled in an adultery scandal. The Stowes would continue to winter in Florida until Calvin's health prevented the long journey. The house inspired Stowe to write *Palmetto-Leaves*, a series of sketches about life in Florida.⁵⁶

73 Forest Street

73 Forest Street was to become Harriet's final house. Having struggled with the grand Oakholm, when she and Calvin settled on a new home in 1873 they purchased an already constructed house in the heart of Nook Farm. With few changes, this house served for twenty-three years as Stowe's base for the final years of her career and the end of her life. She continued to write while living there, with more than a dozen publications (including many books) being produced during the years in which she was in the house.⁵⁷ The final work in her career, *Pogonuc People*, looked back at her beginnings, celebrating the Litchfield of her childhood in a final flourish of the "oral traditions of the parlor" that had served her so well throughout her career.⁵⁸ While Stowe's new works end with *Pogonuc People* she was a shrewd businesswoman who understood the enduring appeal of her own writing. Throughout the 1880s, she "attend[ed] to literary business," suggesting illustrated editions of her books be brought out, re-editing old work for republication, and continuing to enjoy the financial fruit of her earlier labors.⁵⁹ In addition, Stowe went on two successful book tours: a five week one in 1873 to the west, taking her to cities large and small between Reading, Pennsylvania and Chicago; and one in 1874 along the east coast from Virginia to Florida.⁶⁰

In her final years, Stowe drifted into dementia and was often found wandering through the gardens and greenhouses of her neighbors in Nook Farm. She died on July 1, 1896, two weeks after her 85th birthday.

Historic Sites Associated with Harriet Beecher Stowe

None of the other major sites associated with Harriet Beecher Stowe provide as clear or compelling a view of the life she lived as 73 Forest Street. Her childhood home in Litchfield is currently disassembled and in storage. Prior to that, it had been moved and reworked as a dormitory for the Forman School. The house in Cincinnati was her home only from the Beechers' arrival in Ohio in 1832 until her marriage in 1836, although she was a frequent visitor after that. The house where she and Calvin lived in Brunswick, Maine, and where she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been designated a National Historic Landmark. According to the National Historic Landmark nomination form for the property, "[f]ollowing the Stowe residence...the house was extensively rebuilt and given Victorian details."⁶¹ After recounting subsequent alterations, the nomination goes on to state,

⁵⁵ Past Designs, "Historic Landscape Report," 38.

⁵⁶ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 388.

⁵⁷ Martha L. Henning and Susan Goodwin, "A Bibliography for Harriet Beecher Stowe," <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/stowe/stowbib.html>. Accessed November, 2009.

⁵⁸ Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, 388.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 338-4.

⁶¹ Polly Rettig, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, The Harriet Beecher Stowe House,

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“thus, while the Stowe house remains in good condition structurally, much of its historical integrity has been destroyed.”⁶² The Stowes’ residence in Andover has been moved from its original location, caught fire, and reconstructed.⁶³ Oakholm, the Stowes’ first house in Hartford, and their house in Mandarin, Florida, are no longer extant.

The Stowe house on Forest Street provides tangible evidence of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s long and successful career as an activist. Restored to the appearance that it had during her residence, and filled with furniture that she knew, it provides a glimpse into the final years of one of America’s most influential and successful writers and social reformers of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴

Brunswick, Maine,” 2.

⁶² Polly Rettig, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, The Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Brunswick, Maine,” 2.

⁶³ Conversation with Katherine Kane, Executive Director, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

⁶⁴ According to Elizabeth Giard, Collections Manager for the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, excluding rebuilt kitchen and pantry, 65-70% of the furnishings in the house were once owned by Harriet Beecher Stowe, while an additional 10% come from her extended family. Conversation with author, November, 2009.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 77 Forest Street, Hartford, CT

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: .26

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	18	691120	4626205

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries are that portion of the City of Hartford's lot number 156396016 as indicated by the heavy line on the accompanying map entitled "Property Divisions" and further labeled "Sketch plan of Harriet Beecher Stowe property."

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are those of the property as purchased by Calvin and Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1871.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: James Sexton

Address: 274 Clinton Ave.
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Telephone: 914-235-8074

Date: November 2009

Edited by: Alexandra Lord and Patty Henry
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
1849 C St., NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-6906 and (202) 354-2216

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM

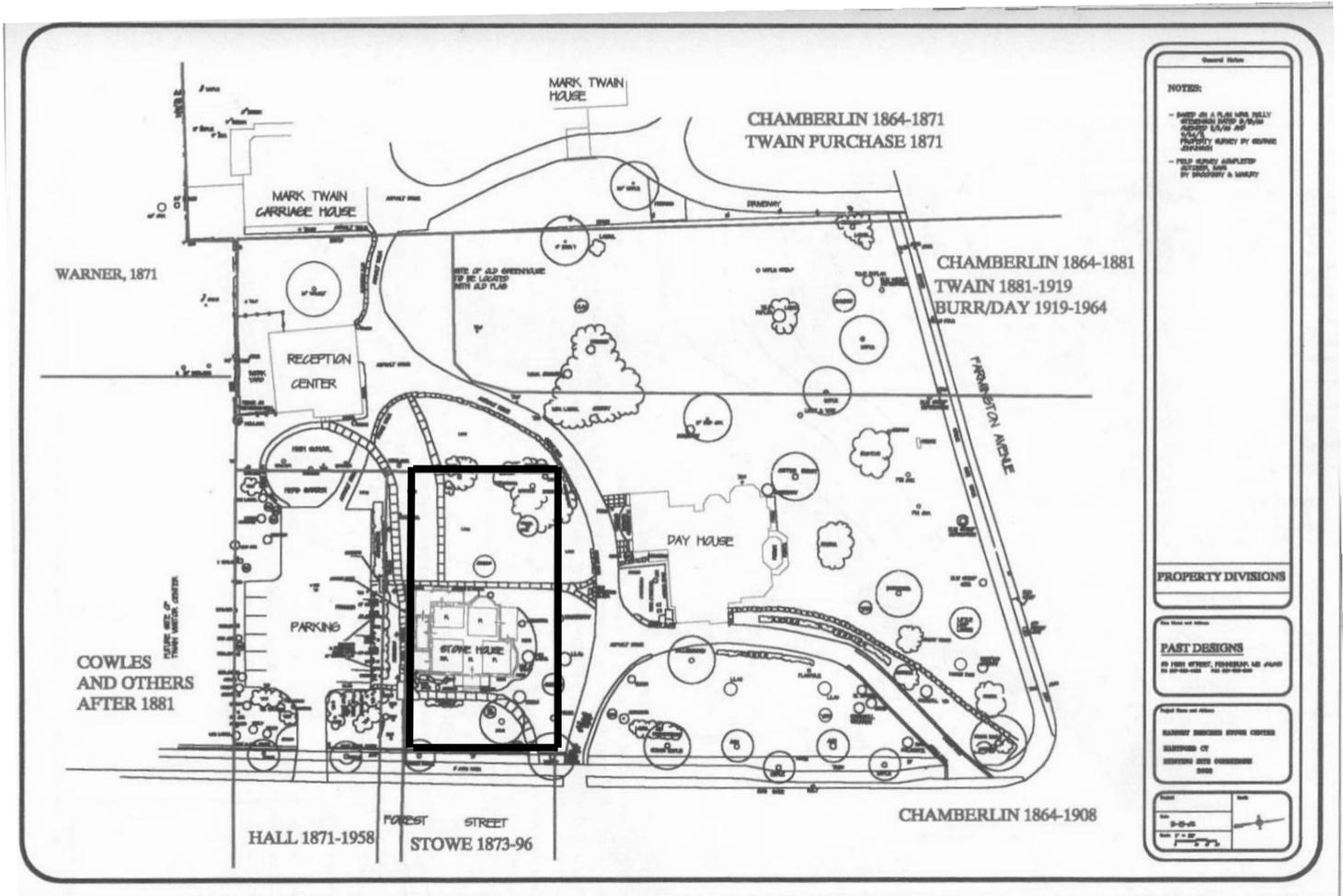
August 28, 2012

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Sketch plan of Harriet Beecher Stowe property. Property boundaries are indicated by solid line around area labeled "Stowe 1873-1896." Plan by Past Designs. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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Front (east) façade. Photograph by James Sexton, November 2009.



Close-up of front portico. Photograph by James Sexton, November 2009.

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Plaster cornice in front parlor. Photograph by Elizabeth Giard, December 2009.

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The recreated kitchen. Photograph by Elizabeth Giard, December 2009.

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MRS. STOWE AT HER HOME IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

Harriet Beecher Stowe on front porch of house, 1896. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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Harriet Beecher Stowe on front lawn, August 18, 1886. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



Front Parlor. Photograph by James Sexton, June 2012.

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Harriet Beecher Stowe in front parlor, August 18, 1886. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



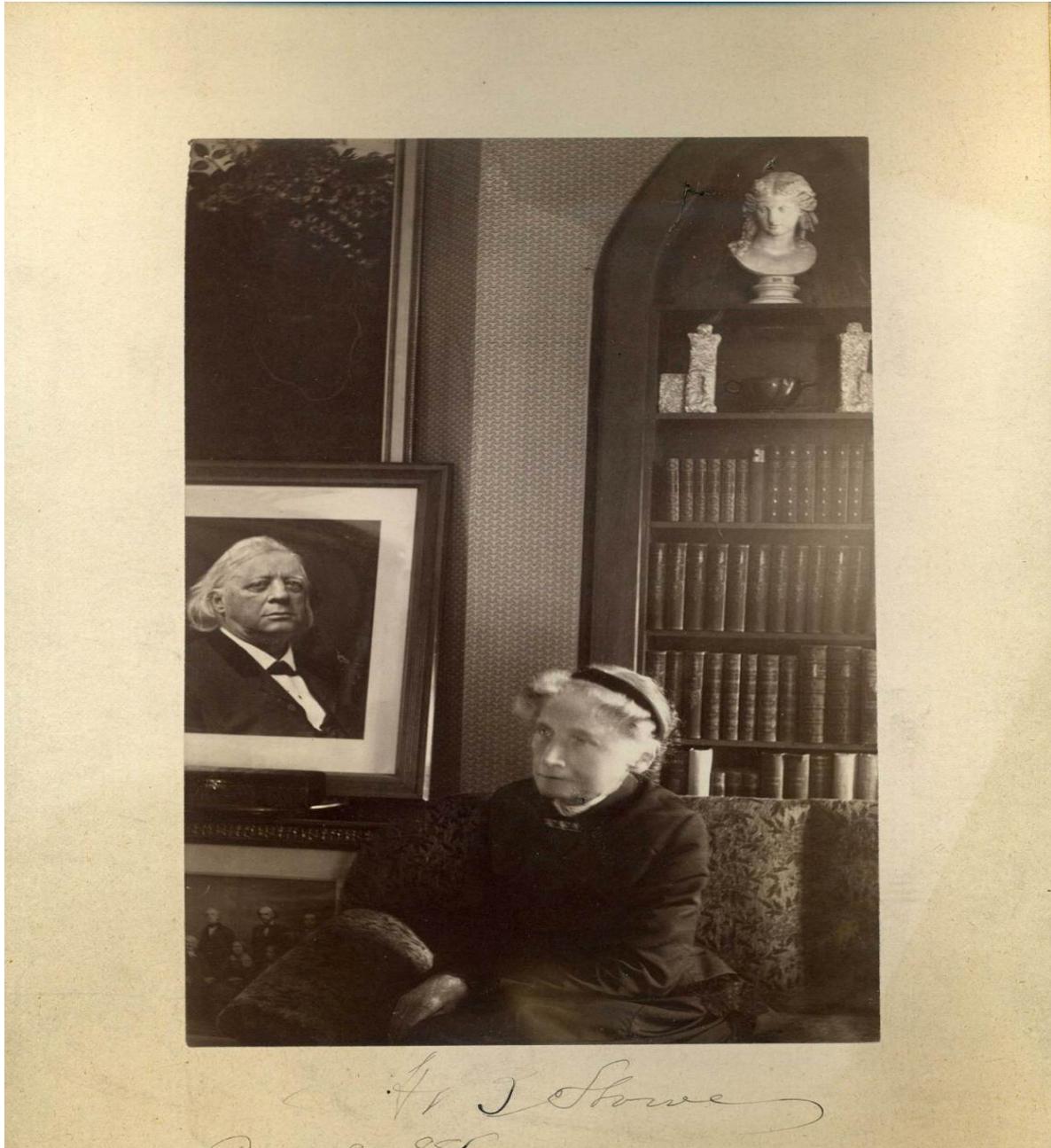
Looking from current front parlor through to back parlor. Photograph by James Sexton, June 2012.

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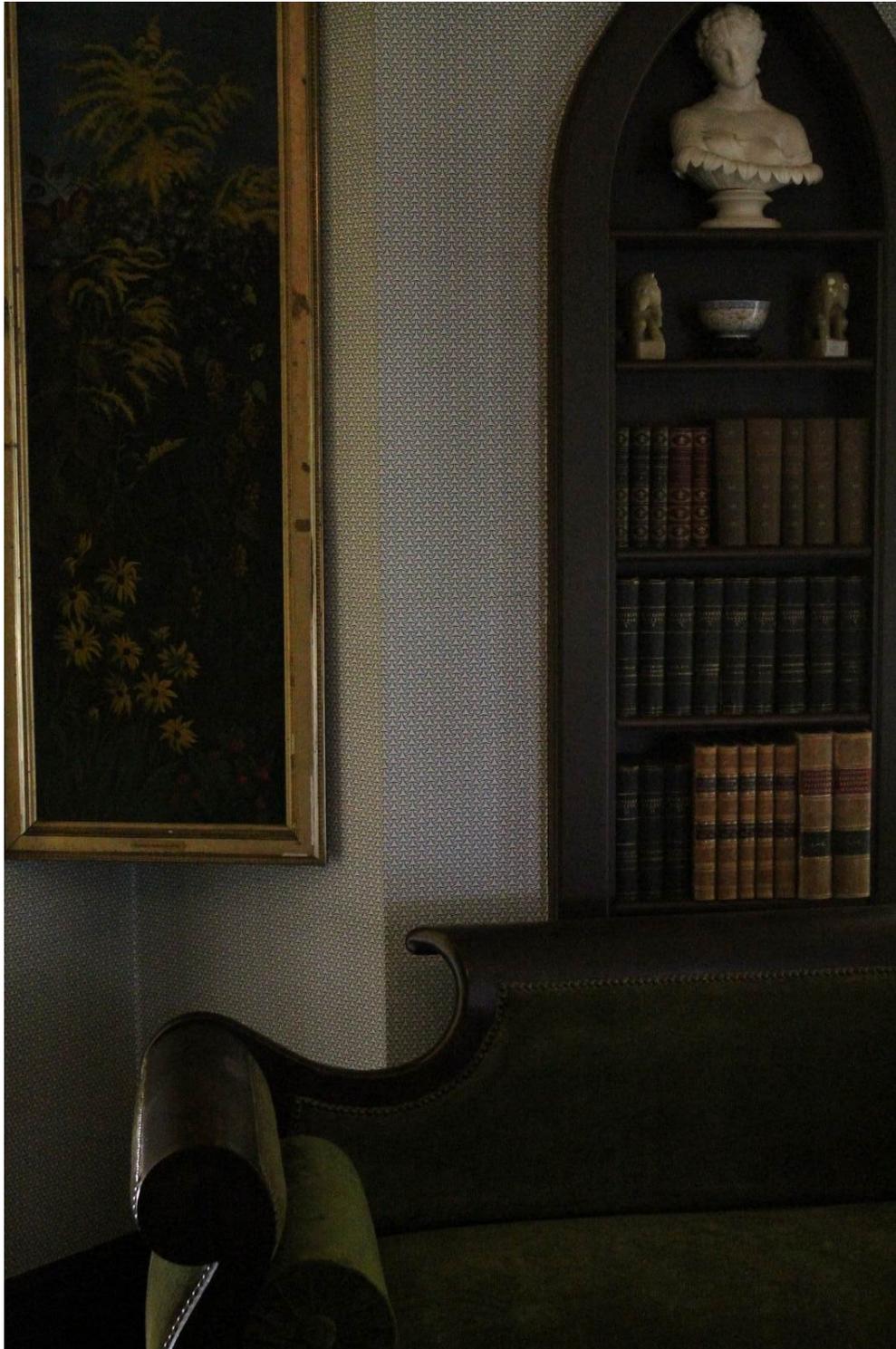
Harriet Beecher Stowe in front parlor, August 18, 1886. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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Detail of current front parlor. Photograph by James Sexton, June 2012.

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Harriet Beecher Stowe in front parlor, August 18, 1896. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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Detail of current front parlor. Photograph by James Sexton, June 2012.

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Exterior of Erastus Collins House, Collins Street, Hartford, Connecticut. Photograph by E. Irving Blomstrann, 1967.



South elevation. Thomas Paske, December 2001. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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West elevation. Thomas Paske, December 2001. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



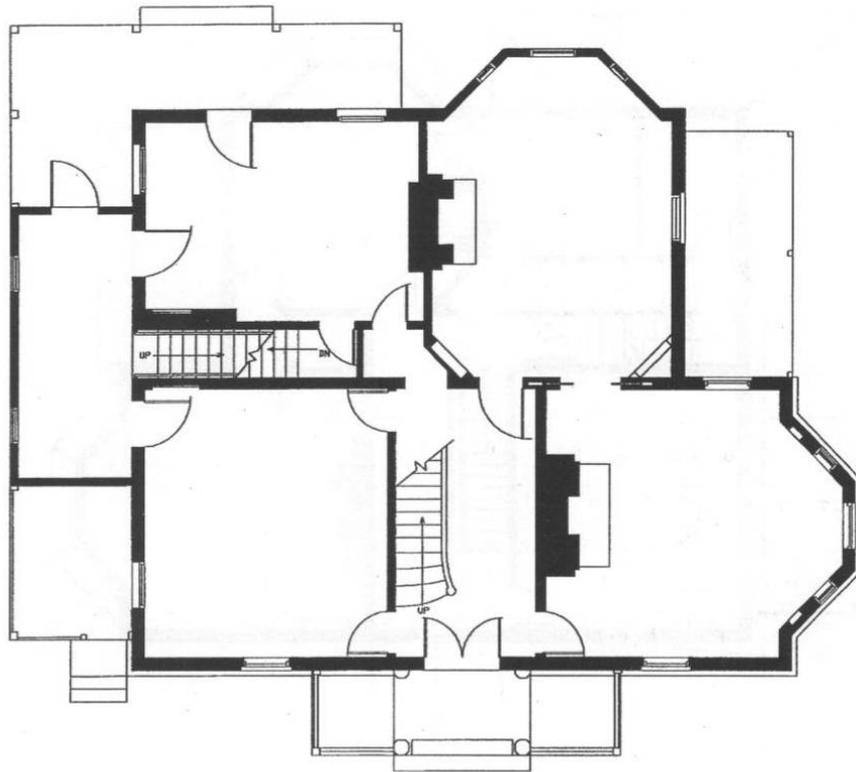
North elevation. Thomas Paske, December 2001. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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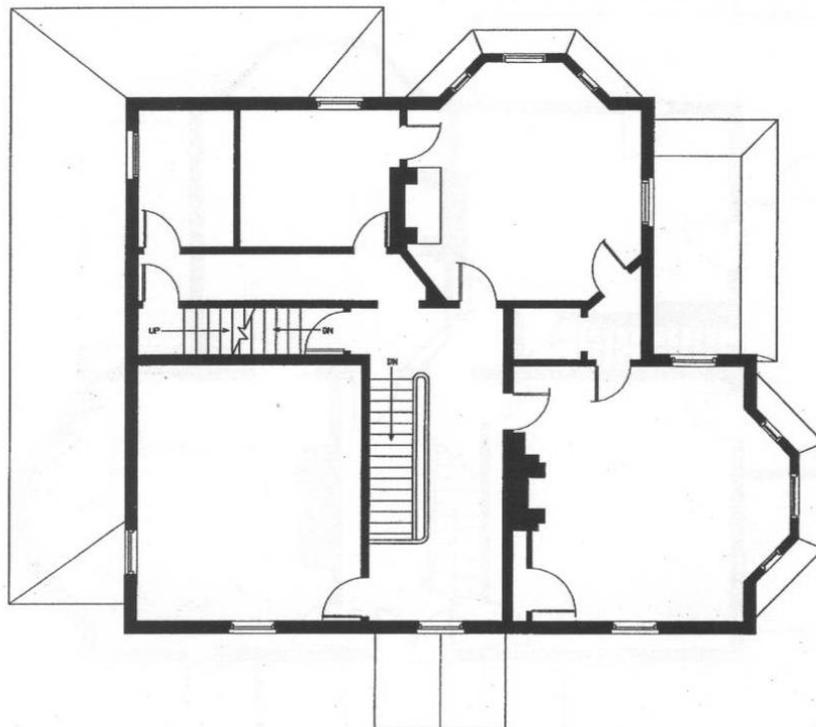
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Existing conditions plan of first floor. Thomas Paske, December 2001. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



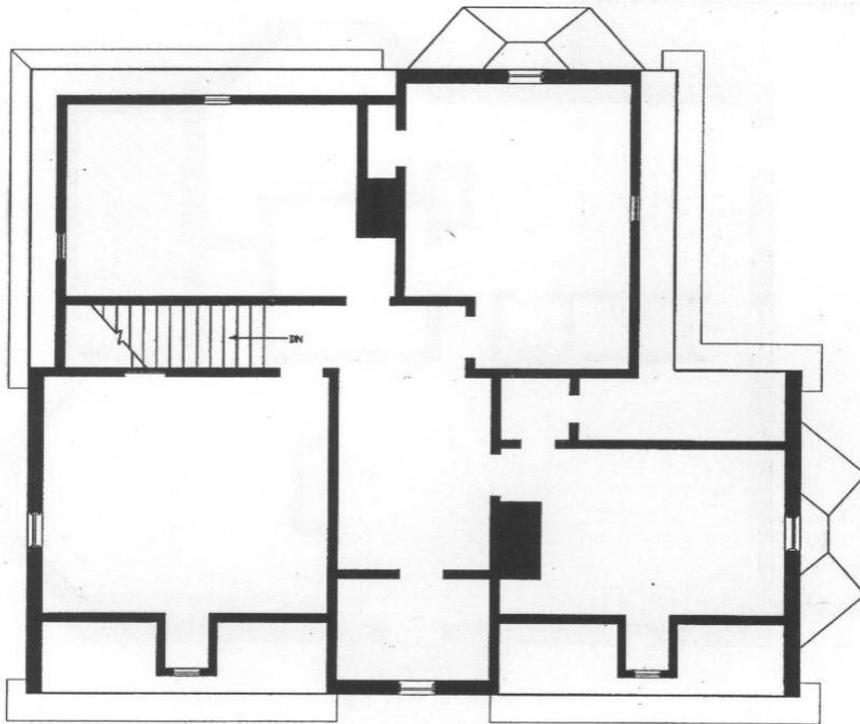
Existing conditions plan of second floor. Thomas Paske, December 2001. Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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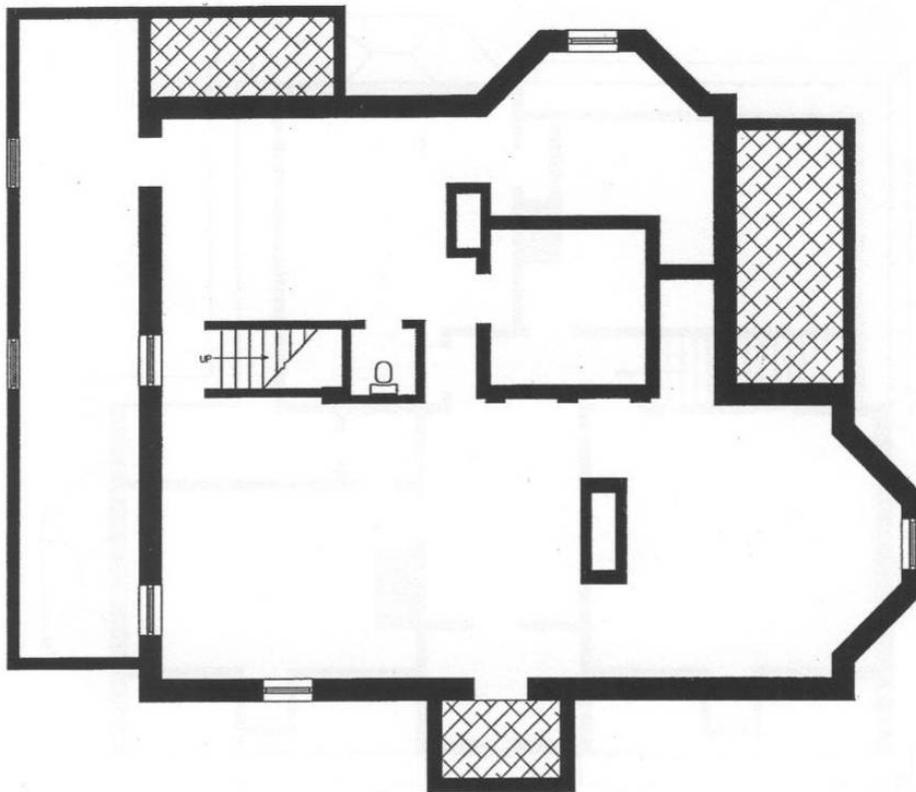
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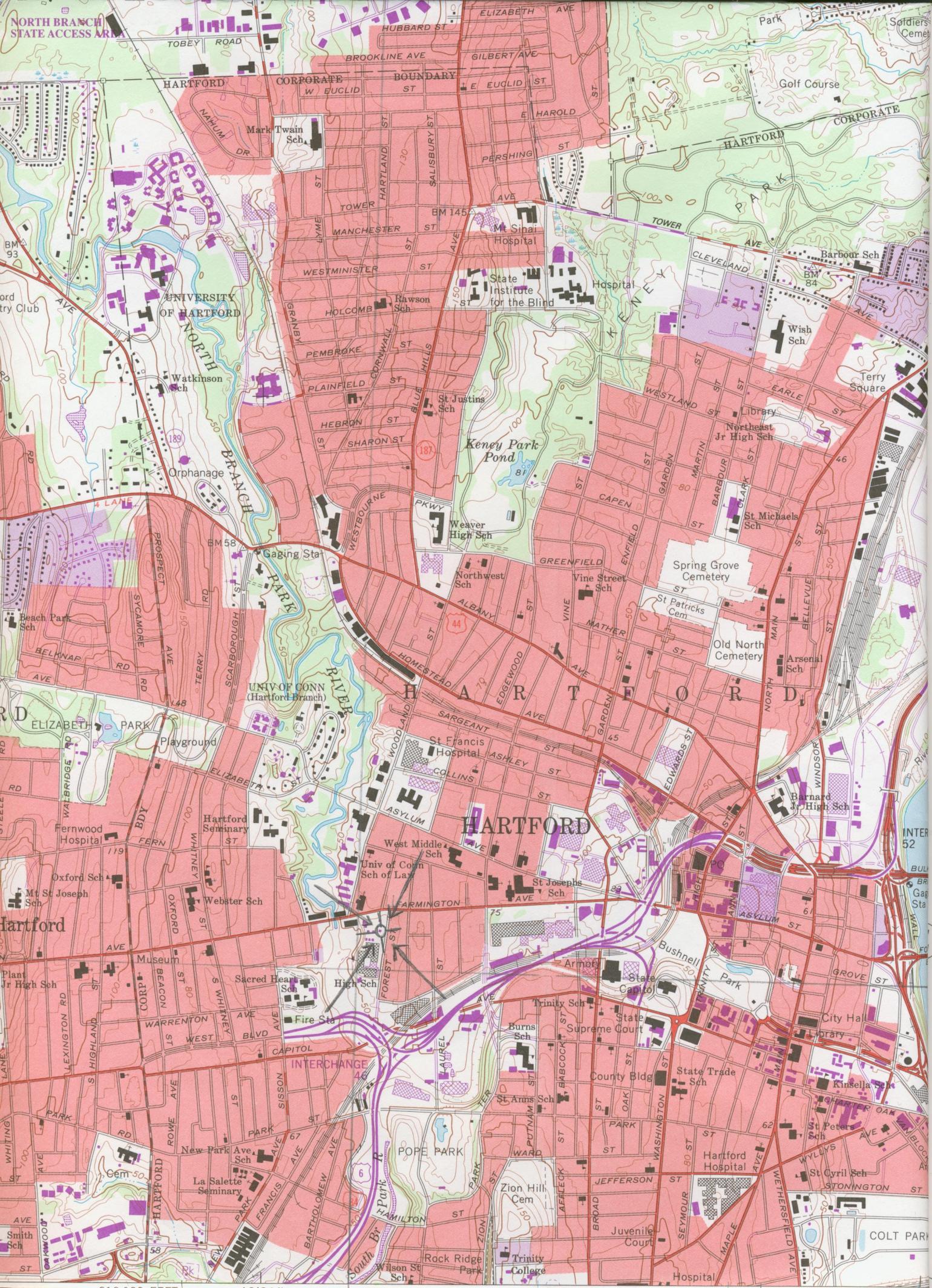
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Existing conditions plan of attic. Thomas Paske, December 2001.
Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



Existing conditions plan of cellar. Thomas Paske, December 2001.
Courtesy of Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.



NORTH BRANCH STATE ACCESS ROAD

HARTFORD

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

HARTFORD

UNIV OF CONN (Hartford Branch)

Hartford

INTERCHANGE 46

POPE PARK

Bushnell Park

COLT PARK

BM 93

189

187

44

70

75

6

6

BM 84

46

30

50

50

50

62

90

INTER 52

BR

Gag Sta

WALK

FO

50

50

50