

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES
 HIST-6 NEW, 5 77

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
 CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
 (203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No. 11
UTM	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR. SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

IDENTIFICATION	1. BUILDING NAME (Common) (Historic)		Chauncey, Elnathan, House	
	2. TOWN CITY	VILLAGE	COUNTY	
	Durham		Middlesex	
	3. STREET AND NUMBER (and or location)			
	Fowler Avenue			
	4. OWNER(S)			
	Field, Jonathan <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private			
	5. USE (Present) (Historic)			
	Unoccupied Residence			
	6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE IF YES, EXPLAIN			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				
DESCRIPTION	7. STYLE OF BUILDING		DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	
	Georgian		ca. 1755	
	8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clapboard <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Brick <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: <u>coursed sandstone mortar foundation</u>			
	9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood frame <input type="checkbox"/> Post and beam <input type="checkbox"/> balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry <input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel			
10. ROOF (Type)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Gable <input type="checkbox"/> Flat <input type="checkbox"/> Mansard <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> Shed <input type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____				
(Material)				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt <input type="checkbox"/> Tin <input type="checkbox"/> Slate				
<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle <input type="checkbox"/> Built up <input type="checkbox"/> Tile <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____				
11. NUMBER OF STORIES		APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS		
3		40½' x 29½'		
12. CONDITION (Structural) (Exterior)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated				
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		WHEN?	(Alterations) IF YES EXPLAIN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site <input type="checkbox"/> Moved			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No W. add.: 10'x24'; nw. add.: 21½'x19'; ne add.:	
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES				
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shed 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Garage <input type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) <u>15'x30' + 14'x20' + 26'x20' + 13'x20'</u>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house <input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Garden				
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT				
<input type="checkbox"/> Open land <input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site				
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> High building density				
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS				

Facing south onto Fowler Avenue, this imposing Colonial-period structure is set in a residential neighborhood consisting of a mixture of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century buildings. The Durham Post Office is located just to the northwest and the house is bordered to the rear by overgrown fields.

DESCRIPTIVE (Continued)

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and or exterior)

The five-bay facade features a central door with plain board trim, flanked by four-paned sidelights. All windows are two-over-two sash except the smaller center, second story nine-over-nine sash, which may be original. There is a 2 story, Greek Revival-style addition to the northwest corner. The two-bay facade contains two six-over-six windows with crown-moulded cornices. There is a west side, single story hip-roofed porch which is supported by five Doric columns--three are free-standing. There are four northwest additions to the house.

18 ARCHITECT

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

The Elnathan Chauncey House was built in 1755. It is a clapboarded, 3 story colonial-period house resting on a mortared sandstone foundation. The post-and-beam frame has a wood-shingled gambrel roof, oriented ridge-to-street and topped by a central corbeled chimney.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Elnathan Chauncey House has remained in the same family since it was built in 1755-1756. Nathaniel Chauncey through his will gave his son Elnathan (1724-1796) the land in 1756 "with a new house thereon erected and materials provided for finishing the same" (MPR 1:204). Nathaniel Chauncey, a native of Hatfield, Massachusetts, came to Durham in 1706, when he was called upon to become the town's first minister. Elnathan was the third son of Rev. Chauncey. He was educated by his father when he was young, went to Yale in 1737, and graduated four years later. In 1745 Elnathan received his license to preach and was going to take a position in North Guilford, but upon his father's request he returned to Durham, started farming and never returned to the ministry. Elnathan married Elizabeth Worthington Gale, the widow of Col. Samuel Gale, in 1759. Together they had four children: Nathaniel (1761-1840), Catherine (b.1764), Elnathan Elihu (1767-1771), and Worthington Gallup (1772-1858). In 1759 Elnathan organized a group of local men to sail to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to claim land for settlement. He also served as a captain during the Revolutionary War. Chauncey became a member of the Lending Library in 1747 and in 1775 his home became the new location for the Durham Book (cont.)

SOURCES

Durham Land Records; Durham Vital Records; Middletown Probate Records; Federal Census of 1820,1850,1880; Beers, J.B. History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884); Durham History Committee Durham, CT, 1866-1980: Century of Change (Durham: 1980); Fowler, William C. History of Durham (Durham: W.C. Fowler, 1866); Whited, Milton Durham's Heritage (Durham:1976); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas.

PHOTO

PHOTOGRAPHER	DATE
Alex Parades	5/84
VIEW	NEGATIVE ON FILE
N	11:18
NAME	DATE
I. Heublein/E.R. Hart	9/22/83
ORGANIZATION	
Greater Middletown Preservation Trust	
ADDRESS	
27 Washington St., Middletown, Conn. 06457	



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

<input type="checkbox"/> None known	<input type="checkbox"/> Highways	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Developers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:			SITE NO.:
UTM: 18	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	8	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 19 Date: 4/26/84

ELNATHAN CHAUNCEY HOUSE, Fowler Avenue, Durham

Company. The Book Company was established in 1733 and is said to be one of the earliest lending libraries in the Colonies. In 1788 Chauncey was appointed Librarian and served in this position for six years. It is believed today that over two-thirds of the books remain. Restrictions on the collection included the following "...Personal and life use of the house where I now live...that no books in said library shall be lent out of the house to anyone; that the library rooms in the attic shall be kept locked, and that the grandchildren of said William C. Fowler after they have become sixteen years of age may have access to said books if W.W. Fowler shall judge best and proper..." (DLR 23:459-460). Upon Elnathan's death in 1796, the property was inherited by his two sons, Nathaniel and Worthington. Both men were engaged in farming and active in local political affairs. Worthington served as justice of the peace, town clerk and both were elected as assemblymen. Apparently leaving no heirs, Nathaniel and Worthington willed the house to their nephew, William Chauncey Fowler. Fowler, the son of Catherine Chauncey and Reuben Rose Fowler, was born in 1793. He attended Yale and was appointed the Rector of Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven. In 1825, after studying theology at Yale, Fowler was ordained as a minister and was appointed pastor of the Congregational Church in Greenfield, Massachusetts. In the same year he married the widow Harriet Webster Cobb, daughter of Noah Webster. They had four children: Emily Webster, Charles Chauncey, William Worthington, and Webster Winthrop. Leaving the church in 1827, Fowler went to Middlebury College as a professor of chemistry and natural history. In 1838 he went to Amherst College as professor of rhetoric and remained there until his retirement in 1843. Fowler returned to Durham in 1858 and took up residence in his grandfather's homestead. Locally, Fowler is best remembered as the author of The History of Durham, which was published in 1866. The homestead was inherited by Fowler's granddaughter, Lylean Fowler Field, and still remains in that family.

Architecturally significant as one of the best examples of a Colonial house in Durham, the house is also historically significant for its association with the Durham Book Company and the members of the Chauncey and Fowler families.