

State of Connecticut  
**CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford 06106

**HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY:**  
Buildings & Structures

**SURVEY OF GUILFORD, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, 06437**  
June-December 1981

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY									
Town No.:					Site No. <u>320</u>				
UTM									
QUAD:									
DISTRICT					IF NR SPECIFY				
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR					<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential				

IDENTIFICATION

1. ADDRESS 55 Park Street  
(map 40, lot 3)
2. NAME  
(historic) Jedediah Lathrop  
NAME  
(common)
3. USE  
(historic) Private house  
USE  
(present) Town agencies
4. IF MOVED, WHEN AND FROM WHERE:



DESCRIPTION

5. ARCHITECT
  6. DATE Various dates are given  
between c1810 and 1822
  7. ALTERATIONS
  8. NOTABLE FEATURES
  9. ARCHITECTURAL-HISTORICAL
- North wing added c1960, details matching house and porch, the Ionic portico imported, surprisingly, from San Francisco. The barn at the rear connected to the house at the same time. Plumbing installed for multiple occupancy.
- A standard Federal house given importance with four chimneys and porch of imposing size. Modillioned cornice and carved window heads and delicate doorway with elliptical fanlight and bold fans in the spandrels contribute to a rich effect.

SIGNIFICANCE

Judging by the many alternates given, the date is apparently not really known. Lathrop bought the land in 1796 with an existing house on it and presumably built the new house not long thereafter. Lathrop was evidently rich, but nothing is known about the source of his wealth or where he came from. He was a warden of Christ Church, a warden of the borough, and a master of St. Alban's Lodge. Later the house was owned by Ralph Dunning Smyth, prominent lawyer and antiquarian and grandfather of Bernard Christian Steiner whose well-known history of Guilford is based in part on Smyth's research. Steiner also later lived here. In 1970, after a number of short occupancies and an interlude (con't.)

SOURCES

10. SOURCES Dorothy Whitfield Society; Connecticut Historical Commission; Photograph: Guilford Keeping Society, Guilford Library File; Chapmam, Early Houses and Landmarks in Guilford p. 6; Dana p. 83 #116; Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture in Connecticut, illustration p. 114; Steiner; Shore Line Times 22 January 1970 and Bicentennial Pages.

In all categories below, check more than one box if applicable.

If you have not actually made certain of the answer to a given question, either leave it blank or write "inferred" after the checked box; or, if drawn from a previous investigator, give source.

11. MATERIALS

- |   |                                     |                                      |  |                                 |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard      | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick      | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco      | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Shingle          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete    | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding            |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aluminum/Vinyl |                                 |

12. STRUCTURE

- |                                      |                                  |  |                                   |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frame: | <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron or Steel | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Post & Beam |                                  |  |                                   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balloon     |                                  |  |                                   |                                 |

13. ROOF

- |   |  |                                   |   |                                 |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pitched      | <input type="checkbox"/> Gable-front     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hip      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saltbox                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-gable     | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat Hip | <input type="checkbox"/> False Dormer   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mansard         | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sawtooth       |                                 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Tower(s)                | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor         | <input type="checkbox"/> Cupola   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dormered Gable | <input type="checkbox"/> Dome   |
| c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Slate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

14. NUMBER OF STORIES:

2 1/2

APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS:

LOT SIZE: approx. 1.15 acre

15. CONDITION: Exterior

- |                                    |  |  |                               |                              |
|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|

16. CONDITION: Structure

- |                                    |                               |                               |                               |                              |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|

17. OUTBUILDINGS (visible from public road)

- |   |   |                                 |                                  |                                  |
|---|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barn(s)                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Carriage House | <input type="checkbox"/> Garage | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop(s) |
| Other (well, stand, greenhouse, gazebo, privy, etc.): |   |                                 |                                  |                                  |

18. LANDSCAPING (visible from public road)

- |   |  |                                     |                                      |                                 |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planted Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden        | <input type="checkbox"/> Terracing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza       | <input type="checkbox"/> Court  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stone Wall(s)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickett Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Post & Rail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

19. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town Street - On Green                        | b. <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial                 | c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural   | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wooded             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-rural  | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lakefront          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clustered Growth  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential - Some | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation, now or originally   | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt marsh         |
|  | • Library & Church on either side                      |   |
| d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Of outstanding scenic/architectural value     |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Of scenic/architectural value                               |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Of supportive value to contiguous scenic/architectural area |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral   |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:  |  |   |

20. ROLE OF BUILDING IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

- |   |                                    |                                     |                                  |                                 |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vital | <input type="checkbox"/> Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|

21. OWNERSHIP

- |                                 |                                  |  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior accessible |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|

INDEX NO. 320

22. Name

P. Odiseos

Date 7/22/81

Photographer

P. Odiseos

Date 7/22/81

Negative Roll 13:3

Organization:

Guilford Preservation Alliance  
P.O. Box 199, Guilford, Conn. 06437

GHF's Neg. Roll 13: 33

23. THREATS TO BUILDING

- |                                     |  |  |                                     |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None Known | <input type="checkbox"/> Highways      | <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism     | <input type="checkbox"/> Developers | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:     |                                 |

24. SUBSEQUENT EVALUATIONS

DESCRIPTION

COMPILED BY

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9. Architectural-Historical con't.

as a decorator's shop, the house was bought by the Town.

The dominant feature of the house is the porch, unlike any other in Guilford. A near twin of the notable porch on the Ira Atwater house in New Haven, which is still standing at 222 College Street, its robust scale is noticeably different from the treatment of the door and windows, which are similar to the early Federal work in Guilford that has been associated with Abraham Coan (see Survey Introduction and 29 Broad Street). Ira Atwater was one of the top builders of New Haven at this time; he was also the builder of the Guilford Congregational Church, in 1829. Perhaps Lathrop had Coan build his house for him around 1810, the period when we know Coan was working, and later, in 1829 when he was in Guilford, had Atwater add the porch (and with it, probably, the fans in the spandrels and possibly the modillioned cornice).

The house is generally referred to as the Major Lathrop house; Kelly however calls it the Major Talmage house, which appears to be a mistake.

Addenda 1983

55 Park Street

Add to Sources: Elizabeth Mills Brown MS notes.