

Learned-Aiken House
157 Washington Street
Norwich
New London County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-253

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

LEARNED-AIKEN HOUSE

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Address: 157 Washington Street, Norwich, New London County,
Connecticut

Present Owner: John E. McGuire

Present Occupant: Owner and tenants

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement of Significance: This is a large frame house built c. 1799 and remodeled and enlarged in 1867.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The house was built c. 1799 by and for Ebenezer Learned, master carpenter. May 1812 the property was deeded to B. M. Ballou. In 1861, the property was bought by Connecticut Governor Buckingham for his daughter and son-in-law, General J. W. Aiken. The property stayed in the Aiken family until 1940; Mary Aiken, daughter of General Aiken was the last to occupy the house. The property was sold to Earl Cleary in 1940 and to the present owner, John E. McGuire, architect, in 1950.
2. Date of erection: 1799
3. Notes on alterations and additions: In 1867 the property was mortgaged by Aiken for \$10,000. to enlarge the house and remodel the original interiors. Presumably, the portico and other Greek Revival details would date from this remodeling. Smaller alterations were made by Aiken in 1880 and 1890. The present owner has refinished the exterior and in 1957 partitioned the interior to use half the house for apartments.
4. Sources of information: Charles M. Weymouth, "The Aiken Homestead" (Student paper in office of Prof. Carroll L. V. Meeks, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; January 12, 1959).

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large frame house, built c. 1799 and enlarged in 1867, with Greek Revival details.

2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This is a large rectangular house, five bays wide, two-and-a-half stories high.
2. Wall construction: Frame with flush board siding on the front.
3. Porches: The front porch is a two-story high, Ionic tetraprostyle portico. The four fluted columns are of wood and support an Ionic entablature and a pediment in the gable end of the porch roof which projects at right angles from the main roof of the house. There is a one-story high porch on the south side of the house with Ionic columns and a balustraded flat roof.
4. Chimneys: Brick chimneys in the end walls.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The paneled front door in the center of the five bay facade has two tall vertical panels. It is set in a Greek Revival doorway with side lights and top light, with the upper horizontal members supported on consoles at the tops of the vertical members, with the flat surfaces of the members covered with closely spaced rosettes, and with characteristic moldings.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows have six over six light, double hung sash, set in molded frames with louvered shutters.
6. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, shingled.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed, molded eaves with an Ionic entablature. The five bay facade is divided by flat, Doric pilasters.

C. Technical Description of Interior: The house has a central hall type plan which has been modified by recent alterations to use part of the house for apartments. The apartments are entered on the north side of the house, and the owner's part of the house uses the main front entrance.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces west on a large, fairly level city lot.

2. Enclosure: There is a wood fence across the front of the lot with molded top rail, large square posts about 10'0" on center, and turned balusters between.
3. Walks, driveways, etc.: There is a concrete sidewalk to the main, front entrance and a driveway on the north side of the house to the rear of the lot.
4. Landscaping: Informal landscaping with lawn, shrubs, flowers and large trees.

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Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania
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