

= Avery Homestead =

The Avery Homestead is a two @-@ story Colonial @-@ style home in Ledyard , Connecticut that was built circa 1696 . Evidence suggests that the house may have begun as a single @-@ story , one @-@ room house and later expanded to a two @-@ story , two @-@ room house by 1726 . The house underwent major additions and renovations by Theophilus Avery and later his grandson , Theophilus Avery . In the mid @-@ 1950s , Amos Avery began a decade @-@ long restoration effort to return the house to its 18th @-@ century appearance . The Avery Homestead is historically significant as a well @-@ preserved example of an 18th @-@ century farmhouse with fine craftsmanship . The home is also historically important because more than twelve generations of the Avery family have resided there over the course of three centuries . The Avery Homestead was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 .

= = Overview = =

The Avery Homestead is located on the west side of Ledyard , Connecticut and faces south on Avery Hill Road . The house overlooks 100 acres (40 @.@ 46 hectares) of stone @-@ walled pasture land that extends south to Stoddards Wharf Road . The two @-@ story house has a shed to the immediate east and a two @-@ story barn to the southeast . Past the barn is a farm pond that is located in a small valley formed by Billings @-@ Avery Brook . The brook extends west for a mile (about 1 @.@ 6 km) before joining the Thames River .

= = Design = =

The Avery Homestead is a two @-@ story Colonial @-@ style house that is believed to have been originally constructed around 1696 . The main block of the house is built in the double cube of the Georgian style . It is unknown if the house originally began as a one @-@ room one @-@ story house with the original structure having been on the current east @-@ end of the main block . The expansion and alteration of houses in this way was common in Ledyard and tool markings and different fenestration patterns are supporting evidence for this theory . The strongest evidence is the pitsaw marks found on the chimney girts in the hall and parlor , exposed framing and sheathing has markings consistent with a water @-@ powered up @-@ and @-@ down saw . It is certain that the house had achieved its two @-@ story and two @-@ room appearance by 1726 due to its parlor being used as a meeting room for church services . Further evidence in the construction of the fireplace flues which indicates that the main block of the house was completed prior to the American Revolution . Around 1780 , the main house was extended by 5 feet (1 @.@ 5 m) in the rear during a two @-@ story addition that gives the house a slight saltbox appearance . This changes were made while under the ownership of Theophilus Avery . Around 1870 , under the ownership Theophilus Avery 's grandson , also Theophilus Avery , the original kitchen ell was removed from the building and became a separate building to the east of the house . The new and present ell that was constructed served as an open shed until 1965 when it was converted to a shop and office .

The framing of the house is unusual because it has " longitudinal summer beams extending from the end girts to the chimney girts in both the hall and the parlor . Corner and intermediate posts are flared in gunstock pattern . The walls are sheathed with vertical planking except in the attic gables , where the planks are laid horizontally , alternating the taper . Framing is cased in the parlor and exposed in the hall , where the summers are adzed and roughly chamfered . " The attic construction is conventional with equally spaced rafters that have mortise and tenon joints at the ridge . This type of construction indicates that the conventional principal rafter or purlin framing may not have been used in Ledyard during that time .

The low granite block foundation of the house is more exposed on the west side of the house , allowing for a full @-@ height door exiting from the cellar . The stone stack supports four fireplaces that each support the hall , hall chamber , parlor and the cellar . Also there is a smoke chamber in the stack in the attic . The original kitchen , now in the hall , features a large fireplace with bake oven

in the rear wall of the firebox . The attic once housed a large loom that was later moved down to the west side of the cellar . Amos G. Avery , who owned and restored the house prior to its 1992 National Register of Historic Places listing , removed a 1871 Victorian balustrade on the front staircase installed by the second Theophilus Avery .

The main barn is oriented on a north ? south axis and has a conventional bent framing and sheathed with vertical boards . It is believed that the addition of a cupola with a hip roof may have been a later addition to the barn . Photos dating from 1870 confirm its age , but the date of construction for the barn cannot be determined , but it may date from the 18th century . The former ell of the house was converted in a shed and dates to around 1780 .

= = Owners = =

More than twelve generations of the Avery family have resided in the Avery Homestead . The original house was constructed about 1696 by William Morgan , around the time of his marriage to Margaret Avery . The two were descendents of James Morgan and James Avery respectively . The house passed to Deacon William Morgan Jr. who used the house to conduct church services from 1726 , when North Groton became a separate parish , and lasted until the completion of a meetinghouse . Deacon William Morgan Jr. sold the house to John Wood in 1745 . Nine years would pass before it would be reacquired by the Avery family in 1754 . Theophilus Avery , the first , owned the house from 1757 to 1798 . The second Theophilus Avery possessed the house from 1852 to 1880 . Amos G. Avery acquired the house in 1946 from his father .

In 1970 , Amos Avery donated 100 acres of land to the Mashantucket Land Trust and kept the surrounding 40 acres . Amos Avery also restored the house to a " more or less " 18th @-@ century appearance through a decade @-@ long restoration effort . The restoration effort began in the mid @-@ 1950s when he poked a hole in the ceiling and felt the molding , spurring his desire to see what was underneath . The ceiling was removed and the room was restored and then it moved to the next room . Avery removed plaster off the fireplaces , replaced the wide floor boards and replicated the wainscoting . Upon Amos Avery 's death in July 1998 , aged 96 , the house passed to his oldest son Edward . Many historical artifacts were put up for auction , including 12 wicker baskets of Mohegan or Pequot origin , which were bid on by the Mashantucket Pequot Museum .

= = Importance = =

The Avery Homestead is historically significant as a " rare survival of a late @-@ seventeenth and early eighteenth @-@ century farmstead , a significance enhanced by the exceptional integrity of its rural setting . The picturesque interrelationship of the house , farmyard , and outbuildings , which is set off by the broad sweep of the associated pasture and crop land , is especially evocative of eighteenth @-@ century lifeways . " Believed to be the oldest building in Ledyard , the Avery Homestead is marked by its fine craftsmanship and state of preservation . The Avery Homestead is also historically important due to its ties to the Avery family . The Avery family has owned the house for three centuries save for a brief nine @-@ year period , from 1745 to 1754 . The Avery Homestead was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 .

= = Plaque = =

A historical plaque awarded to Avery indicates that it is the oldest house in Ledyard and states its date from 1720 , but evidence suggests it to be older . This plaque was part of a statewide funded campaign by the State of Connecticut for the 350th anniversary of the state 's founding . Disagreements over the program were widespread due to the difficulty in dating the homes by craftsmanship and the lack of documentation to prove it . Ledyard recognized the Avery Homestead because of the documentation possessed by Amos G. Avery .