

= Gurdon Bill Store =

The Gurdon Bill Store is located in Ledyard , Connecticut . In 1818 , the land for the store was purchased by Gurdon Bill and his partner , Philip Gray . In 1819 , Gray sold his interest in the store for \$ 500 . Bill operated the store until his death in 1856 and the store is believed to have made its final transaction in 1868 . It has not been used since it was sold to the Congregational Society in 1875 , retaining its historical integrity . The store is a 18 feet (5 @. @ 5 m) by 30 feet (9 @. @ 1 m) one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half story gable @-@ roofed clapboarded structure built upon fieldstone and stone blocks . It has some unusual architecture in the form of a pent @-@ roof and three @-@ part window shutters . Clouette describes the store as " the best preserved early 19th @-@ century store known in Connecticut . " The Gurdon Bill Store was added to the National Register of Historic Places on April 12 , 1982 .

= = Design = =

The Gurdon Bill Store is named for Gurdon Bill , who was born in 1784 . The land was originally purchased by Bill and his partner , Philip Gray , in 1818 . Clouette notes that four years later , Bill was the sole owner of the property ; a record from 1819 says Gray sold his interest in the store to Bill for \$ 500 . Bill continued to run the store until shortly before his death in 1856 . At age 21 , Bill went to Plainfield Academy and later went on to work with various merchants before setting up the store in North Groton , later incorporated as Ledyard , Connecticut . Clouette notes a brief passage of the store out of the Bill family , soon reacquired , before it was sold to the Congregational Society in 1875 . The Congregational Society has made limited use of the store , preserving its historical integrity . Local historians speculate that the store 's final transaction was made in 1868 ; afterwards the store was boarded up and left essentially unused .

Built in 1818 , the Gurdon Bill Store is a 18 feet (5 @. @ 5 m) by 30 feet (9 @. @ 1 m) one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half story clapboarded store . The walls extend higher up than the ceiling to an attic for additional storage space . The wood @-@ shingled gable roof also has a smaller pent roof on the front facade that projects about 1 foot (0 @. @ 30 m) beyond the wall , which is unusual in New England architecture . The foundation of the store is built upon fieldstone and has stone blocks above the ground ; the store has a full cellar . The main facade has two large twelve @-@ by @-@ twelve light sliding sash windows on the left side that can be covered with three @-@ part batten shutters . The main door is a Dutch door with a plain frame and to its right is a smaller six @-@ by @-@ six sash window without a batten shutter . The rear facade is plain and devoid of any windows . The north end of has four windows , two for the attic , and the south end has only two windows for the attic , all with six @-@ over @-@ six sash .

The interior consists of one large room on the south end , from the main entrance , and two smaller connecting rooms on the north . The walls of the main room have wide @-@ board horizontal panels and a large L @-@ shaped counter running parallel to the south and west walls . Behind the counter are tiers of pine shelving and on the west wall are built @-@ in drawers with simple wooden pulls and open bins on the bottom . The east wall has a plank bench . The two connected rooms on the north are similar with both having " plastered walls , a narrow beaded board for pegs or hooks , simple sliding shutters on the windows , beaded post casings , and brick diagonal fireplaces . "

= = Importance = =

Clouette writes , " The Gurdon Bill Store is the best preserved early 19th @-@ century store known in Connecticut . There are earlier store buildings and more elegant ones , but it would appear that the Bill Store is unique in retaining so many of its original features intact , particularly in the interior . " It was submitted to the National Historic Register of Places under criteria A for being a " country store " which supplied items that local farmers needed , but could not produce or manufacture . The building also was submitted for its well @-@ adapted and well @-@ preserved architectural integrity . The store also has an unusual pent @-@ roof and three @-@ part window shutters , the purpose

of which is not entirely known .

Locally , the Gurdon Bill Store was rumored to have been a tavern or an inn , although no evidence or record indicates such a use , and it was apparently a waystation for stagecoaches . A historical marker in the immediate vicinity ties the Gurdon Bill store to the birthplace of Samuel Seabury , America 's first Episcopal bishop . No conclusive evidence for this claim exists .