

## ON THE MARKET

## Milton home was established for a man of many virtues

As far as Colonial Americans were concerned, the Rev. Jacob Hemmingsway was particularly accomplished, learned, and God-fearing while that trifecta of traits isn't terribly novel these days, for the man born in 1683 East Haven, who died 70 years later in the exact same community — the one where, in 1736, he built this 1,900-square-foot saltbox — possessing all three of those qualities was a unique distinction. It could be argued that Rev. Hemmingsway was the first Connecticut native to simultaneously boast the trifurcinate of virtues. A couple of years after the turn of the 18th century, he became the first, the absolute premiere, student at the region's newly-chartered Collegiate School. Today, we call it Yale University; perhaps you've hear of it. Subsequently, he became the first, the absolute premiere, minister in East Haven, which was then a village of New Haven. His lofty title is what eventually compelled the construction of this antique home. It was the paragonage of the Congregational Church of East Haven, and is where the polymath spent the end of his days. In a 2004 article for Yale Alumni Magazine, Judith Ann Schiff detailed the trailblazing trajectory of Rev. Hemmingsway. "When the 19-year-old Jacob settled in the rector's home, no other students were ready. Ezra Stiles, Yale's seventh president, recorded Hemmingsway's comment that he 'solus was all the College the first half-year,'" she explained. "In September, three students joined Jacob, and by the time he graduated the student body had 15 to 20 members. "It was a rigorous education," she continued. "Classes be-



The living room has exposed beams, wide-board flooring, and one of the home's three chimneys.



This saltbox was built in 1736 by the Congregational Church in East Haven for Jacob Hemmingsway, the first student at Yale University.

gan at 6:30 a.m., right after morning prayers. Following a hearty midday dinner of boiled meat and vegetables with cider and beer, the students had an hour and a half of recreation. The afternoon classes were followed by early evening prayers. Study ended at bedtime, which was 9 p.m." Hemmingsway came from money, but his family's wealth afforded him a studious education, not falsified college entrance exams. This was a time when the principal subjects were Greek, Latin, and Hebrew with additional instruction in Latin texts on logic, metaphysics, mathematics, and physics, so expectations were steep for students like Hemmingsway. But it paid off. "Jacob himself had so trouble finding a job," furthered the article. "Two months after his graduation a new Congregational church forming in East Haven was charged to 'seek Sir Hemmingsway that he would give them a taste of his gifts in the preaching of the word.' He was approved at a salary of 50 pounds a year, until the General Court confirmed the agreement in 1706 and supplemented his pay with wood and 'a good convenient dwelling-house.'" The good convenient dwelling-house wasn't this house then, but became so eventually. In the 1960s, the so-called dwelling-house was relocated to a

nearly four-acre lot in the Milton section of Litchfield. It was a rescue mission, since the house was in jeopardy due to encroaching highway infrastructure. "They were in the interstate 93 corridor in the New Haven area and were probably going to be demolished," said listing agent Susan Pollock. "That (relocation) probably wouldn't happen today." But the move didn't disrupt any of the

house's period detail, such as its accomplished center chimney, learned wide-board floors and God-fearing exposed beams. One more thing, if the name

sounds but doesn't quite look familiar, that's because the Hemmingsway family eventually added a "g" in the middle and spawned a descendant named Ernest.

— Jack Coraggio

## IN THE DETAILS

Listing: William Pitt  
 Sotheby's International Realty  
 Price: \$599,000  
 Bedrooms: 3 Baths: 3  
 Acreage: 3.6  
 Year built: 1730

Do you have a home for sale with a story? We'd love to tell it. Share with Bill Cloutier at [bcloutier@rep-am.com](mailto:bcloutier@rep-am.com)