

November 16, 1931  
299 Palisado Avenue  
Windsor, Connecticut

Robert Silliman  
1207 Poquonock Avenue  
Windsor, Connecticut

Dear Bob,

I am always surprised to hear a talk on Windsor history which does not include the mention of Joseph Hayne Rainey. I am also somewhat disappointed that Windsor's latest historic survey does not include this prominent citizen.

Joseph Rainey who was born in Georgetown, South Carolina in 1832 was the first black American to serve in the United States House of Representatives. He served from 1871 until 1879. In 1874, he purchased the house I now live in at 299 Palisado Avenue. Although the enclosed leaflet indicates that Mr. Rainey returned to Georgetown in ill health in 1886 and died the following year, Windsor land records show that the house remained in his wife's name for about 20 years in total. A First Church membership booklet of that era lists he, his wife Susan, and their children as church members.

I believe that Mr. Rainey's existence here in Windsor is historically significant and certainly a criteria for evaluation in having the house placed on the National Register at some future date.

My family and I have visited Joseph Rainey's home in South Carolina which has been restored and I have gathered some information on his life which I would be willing to share with you. I am also enclosing copies of Windsor land records of 1874 and a page from "The Fowles History of Windsor, Connecticut" which describes the Centennial Celebration of July 4, 1876 at which Mr. Rainey spoke.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann (Pleva)