

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0688916

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Edward Yeomans House

AND/OR COMMON Cove Nook Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Brook Street at Palmer Cove

CITY, TOWN Groton

VICINITY OF
CODE 09

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2nd Christopher Dodd
COUNTY CODE
New London 011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Richard Austin Smith

STREET & NUMBER Box 191

CITY, TOWN Noank

VICINITY OF

STATE CT.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Groton Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER 45 Fort Hill Road

CITY, TOWN Groton

STATE CT.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE CT.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cove Nook Farm is located in a rural section of Noank, about a mile from the village itself. The main building is a one and one-half story, gambrel-roofed, frame house. Originally a simple farm dwelling, the structure today is a private residence, pleasantly sited on 5.4 acres bordering Palmer Cove, an inlet of Long Island Sound dividing Groton Long Point from Noank Neck. Although visible from the road (Brook Street), the house is reached by a drive past a modern garage to the left (east). This three-bay structure, and another modern outbuilding to the east which is used for storage and a workshop, together with the fruit and walnut trees planted over most of the property, separate and shield the house from a recent subdivision constructed along the estate's eastern boundary line. The only other building on the property is a unique wooden structure to the south along the water's edge, a summer house constructed by the present owner to his own design.

The present day form of the house is the result of a number of additions which have been made over the course of two hundred and sixty-five years. The earliest section was built in 1713, and consisted of an oak-framed, center-chimney structure of five bays, approximately 36' by 26', with a central entrance on the south side. Sometime before 1760, another bay was added to the east; and the gambrel roof over the main structure was extended to cover these additional ten feet. Between c. 1820 and 1840, a new kitchen was constructed in a pitch-roofed addition to the main building, extending approximately 10' along the house's northern side, and then a further 14' to the west. At the same time a new main entrance facing the road (north) was built at the center of the north wall and surrounded by an 8' by 6' pitch-roofed porch. Obviously, the intention of the owner was to use the former kitchen at the back of the house as a new front parlor or hall. The present owner has closed off this doorway, making the porch an alcove of his dining room, and has added a small shed-roofed porch to the south entry way, making that door again the house's main entrance. The only other modern addition to the house is a two-windowed dormer on the gambrel roof's south side, dating from the early twentieth century.

The exterior of the house is exceedingly plain, reflecting the structure's early date, original use, and the means of its first owner. The foundation is of freestone with larger, shaped, granite capstones forming the course directly beneath the sills. The main part of the house is covered with cedar shingles, below which there appear to be some early clapboards. Most of the windows are twelve over eight in design, although much of the sash has been replaced; and both exterior and interior window frames are very plain. Unadorned corner boards and a narrow, simple bed molding under the cornice complete the exterior. The roof is covered with modern cedar shingles and the chimney stack is new, the brickwork having been rebuilt by the present owner upwards from the second floor.

The interior plan of the house is a traditional, center chim-

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one

ney scheme. Two large front rooms lie to either side of a small stair porch behind the main entrance. At the rear of the house is the original kitchen with a small bedroom to the west and a pantry or buttery to the east. Further to the east in the earliest addition are two more chambers. The second floor consists of two chambers the width of the house lighted by double windows in the gable ends, and in the room to the west by the previously mentioned modern dormer. A short hallway connects the original kitchen with the nineteenth century kitchen ell.

The house is oak framed, and the corner and chimney posts have a very pronounced flare. Throughout the house, except for the summer in the west front room, all major framing members are surrounded by beaded casings. Those covering the chimney posts in the kitchen, however, are modern reproductions. The fireplaces in both the front rooms are plainly framed but have interesting mantels. The lower part of the mantelpiece consists of a wide, projecting, pulvinated frieze, above which are a series of cove moldings, terminating in the mantelshelf itself. The fireplace in the old kitchen has been rebuilt, but that in the kitchen ell, with its small baking oven, is entirely original. There are some old four-panel doors, many of which retain their original latches, sections of a molded chair rail appear in both front rooms, and there is some good horizontal boarding in the stairway. The floors have been replaced throughout most of the house, although the primitive, wide, yellow pine boards may still be seen in the old kitchen.

Structurally the house is in good condition. All the original sills and floor joists have been replaced with sturdy oak substitutes, and some of the rafters under the roof are new. In spite of the many changes which have taken place over the years, the house's early appearance is substantially retained. It is a simple, utilitarian structure, whose merits are undoubtedly highlighted by a picturesque setting.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1713--built

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cove Nook Farm deserves nomination to the National Register for its architectural merit and for its historical associations with the struggle between the first white settlers of Noank and a group of Pequot Indians who also called this isolated corner of Connecticut their home.

This building is the oldest structure in Noank, and demands recognition as one of few remaining examples of the houses built by the English settlers of this portion of Connecticut. A survey of the houses recorded in the Federal Writers' Project Census of Old Buildings, compiled in the 1930's, reveals that forty years ago houses of this type--gambrel-roofed, center-chimney, 1½-story farm houses--were still quite common in the Groton-Mystic-Stonington area. However, since that time, many of these houses, for various reasons, have disappeared, threatening to leave the people of this area without examples of this type of early vernacular architecture. Thus, although Cove Nook Farm is not pristinely original, and the spectacular decorative elements of a Georgian or Federal mansion are absent, it should be considered significant as a survivor of an "endangered species" of small farm houses built at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Also significant, however, is the symbolic value of this house; for the existence of Cove Nook Farm is a tangible reminder of the historical relationship between the first settlers and the Indians of Noank.

In 1712 the town of Groton, wishing to expand eastward towards the Mystic River, laid out a series of allotments in Noank, and the following year Edward Yeomans built his house upon one of the lots. The land was also claimed, however, by a group of Pequots, who petitioned the General Assembly to prevent the English occupation. Although the Pequots had been defeated in the War of 1636, and dispersed widely, many had regrouped in this area. In 1665 the General Assembly granted them 2,000 acres at Mashantuxet in nearby Ledyard, but most disliked this land which was barren, rocky and removed from the coast and continued to live at Noank where fish and wildfowl were plentiful. After an investigation of the competing claims, the General Court ruled that the Pequots must live at Mashantuxet, but that no English settler could interfere with their right to come to Noank for clamming, fishing or fowling.

Apparently Edward Yeomans' house and a grist mill he had con-

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two

structed on the property were built close¹ to the path that the Pequots used to gain access to Palmer Cove. Yeomans, according to a local historian, "was constantly annoyed by the petty thieving of the Indians"² who came on his lot to hunt and fish; and he was determined to keep them out. Thus, in June, 1714, Yeomans brought suit against the Pequot leadership for trespassing on his property.³ Although the outcome of the suit is not recorded, Yeomans left Noank within a few years, and the Pequots continued to exercise their Noank rights at least as late as 1857.

Yeomans was typical of the English settlers in his disregard for the limited privileges granted the Pequots by the General Court. Throughout the 18th century, the Court sent agents to Groton to investigate cases of Indian land being fenced in, cultivated, or cut off for timber by local English. For their part, the Pequots were forceful and articulate in defending their claims, basing them upon past actions by the Court, traditional usage of the land, and the overall inadequacy of the Mashantuxet grant, but even when their petitions were granted, the General Court was unable or unwilling to resist the constant encroachment by local interests.

Footnotes:

¹At least this was the opinion of one James Avery, who gave evidence at a court proceeding in 1726, that "...60 years ago, an Indian path was near about the place where Edward Yeomans lately had a small mill." Quoted in, K. K. Smith, "Information on Cove Nook Farm from the files of Mrs. Eva Butler (Indian and Colonial Research Center, Inc., Old Mystic, CT.)", Noank: n. d. (typescript).

²Noank from the Papers of Claude M. Chester (Essex, CT.: The Pequot Press, in cooperation with the Noank Historical Society, 1970), p. 41.

³Smith, "Information".