

013 10-2101-001B  
EXP. 10/31/83

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUL 23 1984  
date entered AUG 23 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Whittier House

and/or common Lowell House

**2. Location**

street & number Town Highway #54 U.S. 2. N/A not for publication

city, town Danville N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Vermont code 50 county Caledonia code 005

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. Emmett J. Sullivan

street & number 6 Woodlea Rd., RR #2

city, town Kankakee N/A vicinity of state Illinois

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Danville Town Clerk's Office

street & number Rte. 2

city, town Danville, state Vermont

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date January 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Whittier-Lowell house of c. 1785 is a 1½ story, gambrel-roofed Cape dwelling with a small, one-story, shed-roofed rear wing and attached modern open woodshed. The 5x3 bay, post and beam structure has a noteworthy Georgian style entrance with transom lights, flanking pilasters with entasis and an oversized nine panel door. Once part of a 200 acre farm, only the foundation stones remain from the former barn located at the southwest rear of the structure. The wood frame house has preserved a great amount of its original exterior and interior finish and its historic architectural integrity remains intact due to the poverty of the later owners of the property who made few "improvements". Situated on the west side of town highway #54 approximately two miles southeast of Danville Village, the house is set on a steep hill leading into Greenbanks Hollow (S. Danville) where a covered bridge crosses Joes Brook. The permeating roar of the brook is everpresent, although the sawmill, gristmill and woolen mill that led to the nineteenth century development of the Hollow are no longer standing.

The house measures approximately 40'x33' and is set on cut granite blocks with a drywall cellar of cut fieldstone located under the southern half of the structure (which includes the southwest rear wing). The gambrel roof is covered with a combination of replacement wood shingles installed c. 1965 and asphalt shingles covering portions of the wood roof that have failed. A concrete block central chimney stack of c. 1965 rises from the location of the original central chimney mass.

The exterior wood finish of the Whittier-Lowell house exhibits no evidence of ever having been painted and its weathered facades are articulated in a standard Cape manner. The front facade is particularly distinguished by the large principal entrance which is set off by the simple plain corner-boards, narrow plain frieze, molded eaves cornice, and four flanking windows with 12/12 sash and architrave trim. The oversized door has nine raised panels in three tiers of three panels: the left panelled portion is hinged to allow the door to fold in order to permit entrance to the south parlor which would otherwise be obstructed by a door of this size. Double hinged wrought iron strap hinges permit the door to fold and are visible on the vertical board interior finish of the door. A six-light transom is included in the architrave enframingent which is flanked by two pilasters with entasis. The molded neck bands of the pilasters consist of astragal and cavetto moldings. The abacuses of the pilaster capitals support the plain architrave and the bed moldings of the eaves cornice which are stepped out above the entrance surround. The base, now missing, was probably a rectangular applied plinth with a torus and cavetto molding similar to that on the neck of the column. The door and entrance surround are extremely weathered and two raised panels are missing. The outline of the original ornate brass latch is evident in the weathered wood; the original latch is reportedly in possession of a Lowell family descendent in Norwich, Vermont. The exterior finish was removed c. 1965 in order to install insulation and the wall surface is presently clad only with felt paper over the original underlayment.

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The exterior facade of the north gambrel end is noteworthy due to the original wood finish and trim which remain there. 6½" wide pine weatherboards that are approximately 5/8" thick and are fastened with original cut iron nails and some later wire nails have feathered joints. The portion exposed to the weather is somewhat smaller near the bottom, but averages 5" on the upper portions. Fenestration on the north end is varied, with one 12/12 and two 9/6 sashes on the first story, two 9/6 sashes on the second story and three windows with single sash at the corners of the gambrel with 9 lights in the two windows on the second story and 4 lights in the window at the peak. Some of this sash was reproduced from the originals c. 1965. Architrave trim here is extremely weathered and consists of a beaded fascia and a cyma reversa with a simple coved cap molding. The raking cornice of the flush eaves is also much deteriorated but shows evidence that it was simply molded.

The south gambrel end is sheathed with very weathered wood shingles on the lower half and clapboard siding above, both of which are fastened with wire nails and are not original. Due to the fact that the clapboards are nailed over the shingles on the top portion of the facade, it is probable that the shingles replaced the original weatherboard siding during the latter half of the nineteenth century, while the clapboards were applied during the first half of the twentieth century. A secondary entrance on this facade has plain trim, a door of c. 1900 with a large square light and raised cross panels, and shows evidence of once having had a multi-light transom. Fenestration is varied and original trim has been altered due to the addition of siding material on top of earlier siding. The first story has one 12/12 sash and one 9/6 sash, the second story has two 12/8 sashes and two windows with single sash with 9 lights, and the peak has one window with 4 lights. Plain fascia boards articulate the flush raking eaves.

The west rear of the house and wing are clad with weathered wood shingles attached with wire nails, indicating again that this finish replaces the original. Several large sheets of modern wood panelling installed c. 1970 cover the center portion of the wall where two windows with plain trim and 2/2 sash are located. The rear shed roofed wing has a vertical board door on its north facade and a small window on its west rear facade. Extending from the rear of the wing is a shed roof of modern construction supported on tree trunks that serves as a wood shed.

The first floor plan, true to its Cape layout, centers around the former central chimney which has been replaced by a smaller block chimney and plastered darkroom or closet. Lath and nails used on the finish of the closet indicate that the original chimney was replaced in the first half of the nineteenth century with a smaller stack that accommodated stoves. An entrance hall with two closets and two flanking formal rooms with panelled end walls form the front portion of the plan. The central rear "kitchen" is flanked by two small chambers on the north and a side entrance, stairways and a pantry on the south side. Access to the rear wing from the kitchen

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and its proximity to the barn located to the southeast rear of the house indicate that this room was utilized as a milkroom, although it now is used as a rudimentary bathroom. The second floor is reached by a dogleg stairway from the south side entrance hall, with stairs descending to the basement under the ascending staircase. The second floor features an unfinished eaves hall running the length of the rear, providing access to two chambers with panelled end walls which flank the central chimney. The eaves on the front are utilized as storage. An unfinished attic is located above the chambers.

The interior detail of the Whittier-Lowell house is largely original and has remained pristine due to the lack of modern plumbing, kitchen alterations and full electrical service. The panel construction is identical throughout the house and is constructed with the raised panels fitting into the grooved edge of the beaded rails and stiles.

" All pannel work was done with a 1½ stepped pannel plane. The rails and stiles were cut with a 3/8" thumbold plane and a 1/4" plow. The base mouldings, chairrail, door and window architraves were cut with a 7/8" common ogee. A 3/8" bead with a sharp fillet was used on the architraves and on the board sheathing on the entry hall walls. The sash was cut with a ½x¼" ovolo on 1-1/8" stock. The muntins, bars and the stiles and rails were coped with a gouge and not with a coping plane. An interesting feature of the sash is that the muntins and cross bars, instead of being coped and joined in the center of the window, as was the accepted practice in the late 18th Century, were secured with a half lap miter joint." (from random notes as a preliminary review of the Whittier-Lowell House as compiled by joiner Edward Ingraham for Wade I. Treadway, 1983)

On the first floor, the special attention to detail in the northeast front parlor indicates that this is the more formal of the two front rooms. This room features a baseboard with a cyma recta molding, raised panel wainscoting with a chairrail composed of an ovolo and cyma reversa with a plaster wall above. Architrave trim around windows and four-panel doors has two fascia and a cyma reversa. Two panelled window shutters each with two molded panels slide into the walls next to each window. A raised panel in the wainscoting centered beneath each window is of the same propertion as the window panels and provides a pleasing symmetry to the geometry of the panelling pattern. The corner posts are sheathed with beaded finish boards. The panelled end wall is the only wall that has a cornice. The simple cyma recta molding is identical to the cornice on the eaves of the exterior. The

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end wall features a four, raised panel door with a raised cross panel above. Two tiers of raised vertical panels with a raised cross panel above and molded baseboard below occupy the portion of the wall between the door and the fireplace. The rectangular fireplace opening is surrounded with architrave molding which is stepped along the top and further emphasized by a large rectangular overmantel with a raised bolection molding. Two tiers of vertical panels with a cross panel above, identical to the other section flanking the fireplace, completes the treatment of this paneled end wall. The original hearth has a row of 8" square red bricks across the front of the opening and two granite slabs laid behind, all laid in a bed of mortar and not pointed. A hole has been sawn in the panel with bolection molding above the fireplace to accommodate a stovepipe. The horsehair plaster and accordian lath have been removed from the ceiling to reveal hewn timbers interspaced with sawn joists. The sash in the east front window closest to the center has been reglazed with crown glass from New York state, while replacement glazing in the remaining fenestration is salvaged locally. The present painted wood surface is discolored white which is chipped to reveal a light grey paint that is probably the original finish and which is similar to the grey of the front entry hall. The floor bears traces of painted borders and squares in various hues. The baseboards have been painted with an oil based brownish-red paint which is also evident in the corners of the floor and on the bricks of the hearth.

The southeast front parlor of the first story is more simply articulated with a plain baseboard, plaster wall, windows and doors with plain trim and panelled window shutters identical to those in the north parlor. The panelled end wall features a rectangular fireplace opening with a plain surround and two rectangular raised cross panels above, the upper one being the larger. A hole for a stovepipe has been sawn through the upper panel, probably when the original chimney was removed during the first half of the nineteenth century. This portion of the wall is flanked on the left by two tiers of two raised vertical panels and on the right by two tiers of three vertical panels, the panels of the upper tier being longer than the lower ones. A four raised panel door topped by a raised cross panel completes the end wall treatment. An interesting feature evident in the stiles of the panel which enclosed the original now removed masonry fireplace is that the rear portion that would have rested against the masonry has been coped in an irregular manner indicating that it may have been made of stone. The ceiling of this room has been relathed and replastered over the original lath and plaster finish. The present finish on the wood surfaces is a medium gold which was applied over a light tan paint. Under the tan paint is a coat of medium pink preceded by a heavy coat of white paint. The finish on the surface of the wood appears to be a darkened oil or varnish finish.

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The kitchen, centered in the west rear portion of the house, has horizontal wide board wainscoting that may be original and various panelled cabinets in the former location of the original fireplace which was removed some time during the first half of the nineteenth century. The bead on these replacement cabinets is of slightly different profile than the bead on the original woodwork in the rest of the house. The type of tools used to produce these cabinets and their finish indicate that these are the originals installed when the large kitchen fireplace was removed. Original cabinets over the cellar entry on the south end are original and exhibit 4 "H" hinges of iron. Other original hinges are of the "HL" type. The wood is presently painted with dark green gloss enamel with a darkened oil or varnish finish underneath. Some of the wainscoting has recently been stripped. Much of the original plaster finish has been removed.

The north end of this rear portion of the house contains two small chambers with plaster finish, one which must be traversed to gain access to the northeast front formal parlor. The south rear of the dwelling contains a side entry with a hinged bench/woodbox and an enclosed dogleg stairway to the second story. It is finished with vertical board beaded sheathing that is presently painted a dark green of the same type of paint used in the kitchen. Under this is a medium grey and the original finish is a flat red. The keeping room or pantry in the southwest rear corner of the main block has some replacement shelving. Outlines of the original shelving is visible in the several coats of paint over the original oil or varnish finish. The former milkroom that now serves as a rudimentary bathroom is located in the lean-to shed-roofed rear wing with access from the southwest corner of the kitchen. The wall finish is a chalky red paint which is probably the same original finish used in the south entry hall. The cellar, under the shed wing portion of the house, has a whitewash finish and was used most probably as a milk cellar for cool storage, a place to salt (or "powder") meats and a root cellar. It appears to be in nearly original condition.

The south chamber on the second story features a panelled end wall with the rectangular fireplace opening surmounted by three raised cross panels that increase in depth toward the ceiling. It is flanked on the left by two tiers of three vertical raised panels and a four-panel door with a raised cross panel above in the configuration of the south parlor just below. The right side of the fireplace is occupied by a four panel door with plaster above the trim that does not appear to be the original treatment of this portion of the end wall. A blanket rack is built into the front east wall of the room where access to the front eaves hall is provided by a four raised panel door. The closet on the left side of the fireplace is finished on the interior with vertical sheathing molded with the same tools used to create the raised panels and covered with newspaper. Original wood finish is a light blue-green that is much faded from its original dark turquoise shade due to the fading of the sun.

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The north second story chamber is reached by a door in the panelled end wall opening into a small square hall opening off the garret hall at the west rear. It is uniquely articulated with naively rendered mahogany graining on the baseboards, window trim and panelled end wall. The configuration and size of panels is identical to the south chamber, with the exception that the east portion flanking the fireplace is a repetition of the west flanking portion rather than a newer addition as in the south chamber. The wood graining is most probably executed with lampblack applied over dark yellow ochre and finished with a type of protective glaze coat. It is the most well preserved original finish in the house due to the lack of sun light and its northern exposure.

## 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 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** c. 1785 **Builder/Architect** David Whittier, owner

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Whittier-Lowell house is an excellent representative of the gambrel-roofed, Georgian style, Cape dwelling which building type can be directly traced to those gambrel Capes popular in Massachusetts from c. 1690-1760. The architectural style and its early date are virtually non-existent in northeastern Vermont, which was largely settled at the turn of the nineteenth century. The preservation of a large number of original building components and their finish, including four fully panelled end walls, as well as the architectural integrity of the structure are resources that are important in tracing building practice and the development of style in Vermont.

It is evident from HABS and other documentation, as well as from a present day survey of existing gambrel Capes, that this house type became very popular in the Essex County area of Massachusetts during the first half of the eighteenth century. The gambrel roof allowed for a house of much wider plan which took every advantage of the increased living space made available on the upper story due to the additional headroom under the eaves. David Whittier, a gentleman from Methuen in northeastern Massachusetts, was one of the original settlers of Danville and the grantee of approximately 200 acres of land in 1786. When he sold lots 40, 41 and 43 to Ebenezer Sawyer, also of Methuen and of Dracut, MA., in 1789, the existence of a sawmill, a gristmill and a house and barn was noted.<sup>1</sup> The use of the Massachusetts prototype for the Whittier-Lowell house was fitting in that it was constructed for a man referred to as a "gentleman" who would have wanted his home to reflect his social standing and who would have used an architectural style that was a step above that which was commonly built in the Vermont area. The larger scale, the Georgian architectural detail of the unique principal entrance and the formal interior which employed four (originally five) panelled end walls, all are attributes made possible by the gambrel-roofed Cape that Whittier incorporated into plans for his new home. The number of early settlers from northeastern Massachusetts insured that there were others familiar with this style who could have been employed as a joiner in the event that Whittier was not skilled enough to execute every construction detail of the house.

Ownership of the property passed from Whittier to Sawyer in 1789, and from Sawyer to Mitchell Davis of Tewksbury, Mass. in 1793. Either the sawmill or gristmill burned at this time, as it is noted that when Davis went to Massachusetts to fetch his family, he brought back nails and glass in order to rebuild the mill.<sup>2</sup> Daniel Lowell, a druggist from Gilmanton, N.H., acquired the property in 1809 and built a small store on the acreage (no longer standing) from which to sell his medicines.<sup>3</sup> In 1818, Daniel Lowell tried to sell the property due to poor health. He sold it to his brother

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Child, Hamilton, Gazateer of Caledonia & Essex Counties, Vt.,  
 Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co.,  
 Edit: The Early American Society, Early Homes of Massachusetts, orig. published as  
 "The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs," The Arno Press, 1977

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 3/4 acres

Quadrangle name St. Johnsbury, Vt.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

A	1 8	7 2 9 2 2 5	4 9 1 7 7 5 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary begins at Point A, located at the intersection of an easterly extension of a line parallel to and 60' north of the north gambrel end of

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah Noble, Preservation Consultant

organization KEEP IT UP ASSOCIATES

date December 1983

street & number RFD Box 85

telephone (802) 695-2507

city or town Concord

state Vermont

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Eric Gilbertson*

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

date July 13, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 8-23-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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who never made payment. Daniel foreclosed on the property and deeded it to his brother's 11 children, retaining his right to stay in the upstairs bedroom for the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup> The property remained in Lowell ownership until 1957, during which time a foreclosure in the nineteenth century reduced the holdings to 30 acres. Several transactions of ownership took place between 1958 and the present.

Greenbanks Hollow developed into a town center in the mid-nineteenth century. Benjamin Greenbank built an immense 3½ story woolen mill on the banks of nearby Joes Brook, where there already were a sawmill and gristmill built originally by David Whittier. This large mill provided jobs and brought prosperity to the Hollow, where a post office, several stores and a number of homes were built. C. M. Gilbert purchased the grist mill on road 71 in 1875 and ground 7,000 bushels of wheat per year with three runs of stones.<sup>5</sup> The sawmill was owned by B. Greenbank then, and it did custom sawing as well as cutting about 250,000 feet of rough lumber per year.<sup>6</sup> The woolen mill burned in 1885 and Greenbanks Hollow gradually became the quiet crossroads it is today. Stone foundations of the mills, stores and houses flank the covered bridge over Joes Brook as the only indicators that this Hollow once bustled with activity.

The Whittier-Lowell house, often referred to as the oldest house in Danville, remains almost as it was built, with little more than the weathering of the wood and the peeling of the paint to mark the passage of time. The present owners plan to completely record the present condition of the house before they carry out a careful restoration/rehabilitation.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Danville Land Records, Book 1 , page 46-47.
2. Hamilton Child, Gazateer of Caledonia & Essex Counties, Vt., 1764-1887, (Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1887 ), p.182.
3. Interview, David Warden, 1982.
4. Ibid.
5. Child, op. cit., p.175.
6. Ibid, p.175.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (cont.)

Danville Land Records

Notes as a preliminary review of the Whittier-Lowell House as compiled by joiner Edward Ingraham for Wade I. Treadway, 1983

Interview with David Warden, 1982

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (cont.)

the house and a line following the western right of way of town highway #54. It then proceeds generally southerly along said line to Point B, located at the intersection of said line with an easterly extension of a line parallel to and 60' south of the south gambrel end of the house. It then proceeds generally westerly along said extension, said line and a westerly extension thereof, to Point C, located at the intersection of said extension with a southerly extension of a line parallel to and 50' west of the west rear wall of the house. It then proceeds generally northerly along said extension, said line and a northerly extension thereof, to Point D, located at the intersection of said extension with a westerly extension of a line parallel to and 60' north of the north gambrel end of the house. It then proceeds generally easterly along said extension, said line and an easterly extension thereof, to Point A, the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes all open land between town highway #54 on the east, a hedgerow on the west, a stonewall and hedgerow on the north and a copse of trees in a field on the south. The amount of property included in the boundary is sufficient to convey the context of the property and to protect it. The nominated property consists of the land immediately adjacent to and associated with the house. A description of the entire parcel of land now in common ownership with the house can be found in Book 63, pages 208-210 of the Danville Land Records.

WHITTIER-LOWELL HOUSE

DANVILLE, VERMONT

December, 1983

