

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 30 1976
DATE ENTERED MAY 17 1976

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 *h*
 AND/OR COMMON
Merrill-Poor House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *NF of Cambridge on ME*
Rt 120
CITY, TOWN Andover *vic* VICINITY OF 2nd Hon. William Cohen
STATE Maine CODE 023 COUNTY Oxford CODE 017

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME William R. Chandler
STREET & NUMBER East Hill Road, R.D. 2
CITY, TOWN Woodbury, STATE Connecticut
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Oxford County Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN South Paris, STATE Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Merrill-Poor House in Andover is a fascinating example of a homestead which has evolved architecturally over a long period of time with its alterations reflecting the changing life styles of its owners. Begun in the 1790's as an ambitious farmhouse, it did not reach its present state until the 1890's as a summer retreat.

The main house is a massive two and a half story gable roof dwelling. It stands on a granite foundation, is of frame construction with a clapboarded exterior, and has a large central chimney.

The facade or west wall displays the symmetrical five bay design so typical of 18th and early 19th century New England architecture. On the first story the central bay contains a simple doorway which is fronted by a Queen Anne style portico. This portico marks the beginning of a porch which extends along the west and north sides of the house. Flanking either side of the doorway and portico is a pair of twelve over twelve paned windows enframed by simple Greek Revival molding.

The central bay of the second story contains a door which opens on to a balustraded porch that is created by the portico roof. This second story doorway is flanked on each side by a pair of twelve over eight windows. Projecting from the roof above the doorway is a large dormer which contains two twelve over eight windows and is capped by a bold triangular pediment. The large central chimney is located directly behind this dormer. The front of the chimney bears a recessed panel with the inscription "E M 1791", standing for Ezekial Merrill and the year in which he completed the homestead.

The north and south walls of the main house feature window arrangements of four windows on the first and second stories and two on the half story. The first story windows are comprised of twelve over twelve panes, while the second and half story windows have twelve over eight panes. The east or rear wall has three twelve over twelve windows on the first story and three twelve over eight windows on the second. Projecting from the center of the rear roof is a dormer with a pair of twelve over eight windows. The Greek Revival window trim of the facade is carried to the side and rear walls of the house. Simple Greek Revival moldings are also found on its corners and cornice.

The general 18th century appearance of the main house at the Merrill-Poor Homestead is actually the Colonial Revival creation of the Boston architect Edward C. Cabot at the request of Henry Varnum Poor. Ezekiel Merrill's original dwelling of 1791 was a two story hipped roof house with two large chimnies. During the 19th century, its exterior trim was probably altered to the Greek Revival style. Cabot's 1890 remodelling included the addition of the facade portico and porch, the reintroduction of small paned sash, and the replacement of the hipped roof and double chimney arrangement with a dormered gable roof and a central chimney.

(See continuation sheets)

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1791, 1890, 1896 BUILDER/ARCHITECT 1890 Remodelling: Edward C. Cabot of Boston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE 1896 Addition: Stanford White of New York
Great Hall

Beyond its architectural importance and the fact that it is the first, oldest standing and largest frame house in Andover, the Merrill-Poor House has a far deeper significance. It stands as the one permanent anchor which held fast during the history of a remarkable family, a family which epitomizes the evolution of the devout puritan frontier ethic, through the nineteenth century work-success syndrome, into twentieth century economic comfort and stability. It is a house which was built amid the rigors of pioneer life in Maine, which has remained a symbol of family antecedents for six generations and is now a site of recreational summer activity.

Ezekiel Merrill was the first of a group of Revolutionary War veterans to occupy a portion of land they had purchased while in the army to form a township in what is now Andover. Arriving alone in 1788, he built a log house to which he brought his wife, seven children, and his possessions in seven birch bark canoes up the Androscoggin and Ellis Rivers the following year. Shortly he began work on what is now the main body of the Merrill-Poor House. It was an enormous task and not completed until 1791.

By this time Ezekiel Merrill had become a prosperous man involved in various local enterprises and was an acknowledged leader in the community which had grown up in Andover. His daughter, Mary married Sylvanus Poor, son of Eben Poor, also one of the earliest settlers in the town. To them the house was left upon Ezekiel's death.

Two of their sons, Henry Varnum Poor and John Alfred Poor attended Bowdoin College and became law partners in Bangor. Both were imbued with a combination of the Puritan reverence for hard work as a service to God and the frontier necessity of constant striving for survival and success. Both also became involved in the development of railroads almost at the beginning of the emergence of this mode of transportation which was to become a vital tool in America's industrial revolution.

John A. Poor was one of the first Americans to foresee the giant role of railroads in the transformation of society. In fact, he looked upon railroads "as the principal agent, the prime mover in advancing the great interests of humanity." He spent a career as a railroad promoter and developer which (see continuation sheets)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McGovern, James R., Yankee Family, New Orleans, 1975

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	3 6 2 1 0 0	4 9 4 3 7 8 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

750

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Frank A. Beard, Historic Preservationist Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Architectural Historian	DATE	
ORGANIZATION	Maine Historic Preservation Commission	DATE	December, 1975
STREET & NUMBER	31 Western Avenue	TELEPHONE	207-289-2133
CITY OR TOWN	Augusta,	STATE	Maine

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *H. Dawn Millitt* DATE 1/26/76

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>W. Shettleworth</i>	DATE 5/17/76
ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
ATTEST: <i>Charles H. ...</i>	DATE 5.17.76
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 30 1976

DATE ENTERED MAY 17 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET Merrill-Poor House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The 1890 remodelling brought changes to the interior as well as the exterior of the main house. On the first floor, Cabot retained the late 18th century entrance hall with its staircase as well as the original paneling in the front parlor flanking it on either side. Behind these three areas, he created a large dining room running the entire width of the house. The remainder of the interior was refashioned into a maze of bedrooms which resembles a small summer hotel of the period. The dining room and bedrooms are finished in simple late 19th century woodwork.

Edward C. Cabot's remodelling of 1890 also changed the location of the ell. Originally a one and a half story ell was attached to the house at the southeast corner of the south wall. This structure was removed, and the present one and a half story frame ell was built at the southeast corner of the east wall. Consisting of a kitchen and pantry on the first story and bedrooms in the half story, this long appendage connected to an earlier barn.

In 1896 the barn was replaced by a remarkable structure variously referred to as the "New House", the "Great Hall", and the "Studio." This massive rectangular building stands two stories high with a hipped roof. It rests on a granite foundation and is of frame construction with a clapboarded exterior. A large doorway with a portico is located on the first story of the west wall, while two three part windows are symmetrically placed on its second story. Four three part windows also appear on the south wall. The east wall contains a floor to ceiling window at the southeast corner and a first and second story window at the northeast corner. Reflecting an interior arrangement of bedrooms, the north wall features a door and six windows on the first story and six more windows on the second story. There is also a horizontal roof dormer in front of a massive central chimney.

While the north side of the 1896 addition is devoted mainly to bedrooms, the structure's primary function is to house a "Great Hall." In Yankee Family, a study of the Poor Family, James R. McGovern describes this grand space as:

...a baronial hunting lodge 60x90 feet and another 90 feet in height at the apex of its cathedral ceiling. Family legend holds that Stanford White designed the room as a special favor to Will (Henry William Poor), who paid for its construction. Surely it was done in the grandiose, celebrated style of the period. The motif was Gothic with massive three inch thick oaken doors and huge wrought iron latches, numerous heavy wooden beams and an imposing ten-foot high fireplace including a stone mantel twelve feet in length and weighing more than a ton. When the heavy oaken furniture, impressive library, moose heads and polar bear rugs were added, the effect was complete.

In conclusion, McGovern aptly summarizes the architectural and social evolution of the Merrill-Poor House with the following observation:

(See continuation sheet)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 30 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAY 17 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET Merrill-Poor House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

"A house which had once declared the needs of a successful American frontiersman now bespoke those of an industrial lord, Will Poor, who often came to Merrill House to entertain his business and personal friends. Visitors were fascinated by its beauty then, just as they are today, Merrill House looking much as it did when Henry and Will Poor lived there."

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 30 1976

DATE ENTERED MAY 17 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET Merrill-Poor House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

culminated in his plan for the European and North American Railroad. This railroad was designed to transport passengers to Nova Scotia and thence to Ireland, thus reducing the shipboard travel by one half between North America and Europe.

Henry Varnum Poor was an embodiment of the family traditions of industry and culture and, living to the age 96 at his death in 1906, became the family patriarch during its greatest period of achievement. Further cementing the Yankee background of the clan, he married in 1841, Mary Pierce, daughter of the Rev. John Pierce of Brookline, Mass. Both marriage partners could trace all their family lines back to the middle 1600's in New England.

Shortly after their marriage, they moved to New York City, where Henry became editor and part owner of the American Railroad Journal. Thus began his career as one of the consummate publicists and propagandists for America's technological revolution of the mid 19th century. In fact his life reflects how the social reform impulse of the pre-Civil War period became absorbed in the larger social task of reconstructing America as a technological society in the Gilded Age.

With the industrial boom of the 1850's, the American Railroad Journal became an important spokesman for railroad sales and promotion. Circulation and advertising increased, and Henry V. Poor began to establish his family in modest affluence. His wife, however, came to dislike the city and with her children each summer sought the solace and fresh air of the great house in Andover.

Henry sold the American Railroad Journal in 1861 and began a career as a railroad lobbyist in Congress and an investor in stocks with the "money-making set". Great financial successes during the first three years of the Civil War made it possible for him to purchase a house in Brookline, his wife's childhood home, much to her pleasure. There they resided the rest of their lives, although he spent much of his time away from home in his almost fanatic attachment to hard work and the achievement of even greater success. This was gained when he began publishing the famous Poor's Manual of the Railroads of the United States which became the spokesman of the now enormous railroad industry. Still, Mary and the children, and he when he could, returned to Andover each summer.

Finally, in 1890, in the twilight of his life, he laid down a measure of his burden and purchased from other members of the family the old house which he refurbished and to which he added the "great hall" in 1896, possibly designed by Stanford White a close friend of his son, Will. He also laid out the grounds, adding carriageways, walkways and bowers with the guidance of (see continuation sheets)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 30 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAY 17 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET Merri-l-Poor House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

another friend, the noted Landscape Architect, Frederick Law Olmstead.

Henry V. Poor's only son to survive to adulthood, Henry William, carried with him the same ambition and drive as his father and achieved even greater pinnacles of success. A gifted businessman, he amassed an enormous fortune through the sale of railroad equipment and securities. He was intimate with such financial figures as Jay Gould and J. P. Morgan and was a friend of President Theodore Roosevelt. He and his wife, Constance (Brandon) lived near the summit of the grand style of the 1880's and 90's, renting villas in Capri, estates in Scotland and owning a mammoth yacht. He built a huge Jacobean house in Tuxedo Park, but his greatest monument was an enormous mansion in Grammercy Park designed by Stanford White and valued at \$1,000,000. It included a library valued at an additional \$300,000.

Henry W. Poor suffered severe financial reverses in the Panic of 1907, forcing him to sell these residences. However, as evidence of the close family attachment in which it was held, he retained the Andover house which he had inherited. He later recouped a portion of his losses by taking over the Manual of Railroads begun by his father. His children maintained the high family standards of performance by success in various fields or by substantial marriages. However, the old work ethic and deep religious convictions were replaced by greater concern for culture and social problems.

Henry W. Poor's only married sister, Mary (Poor) Chandler eventually became the owner of the Andover house. She had married Alfred Chandler, a gifted politician who served as selectman in Brookline for more than 40 years and established the representative town meeting form of government which is still in use today. Four of their sons graduated from Harvard, one from M.I.T. and their daughter from Radcliffe and like the 5th generation of Poors established themselves as productive and useful citizens. Their grandson, William R. Chandler is the present owner of the house in Andover which still lends its grace and the beauty of its surroundings to summering family members.

The Merrill-Poor House, then, stands for something more than the courage and drive of a frontier pioneer. It is also the symbol of an archetypal evolving old New England family.