

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



080

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

**1. Name**

historic John Tarr House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 29 Ferry Lane not for publication

city, town Biddeford vicinity of congressional district First

state Maine code 23 county York code 031

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 and Mary Guignard

street & number 280 Alfred Street

city, town Biddeford, vicinity of state Maine

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. York County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Alfred, state Maine

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

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

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

The John Tarr House of Biddeford, Maine, dating from c.1730, is among the State's earliest surviving dwellings. Its exterior displays characteristics typical of the low-posted Cape Cod style house, with central chimney, central entrance, and five-bay facade (which faces east). Another entrance of later indeterminate date faces south.

A one-story ell extends from the north end of the house. Except for the facade's northern two bays (which are 6/6), fenestration throughout is 2/2. Originally this would have been 9/6 or possibly of casement form.

Architecturally, the important features of the Tarr House are internal. Two principal first-floor rooms feature fully panelled walls typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most significant of all, however, is the kitchen which has completely wainscotted walls and ceiling and internal sliding wooden shutters. The wainscoting consists of wide hand-planed panel and stile boarding.

The only other example of a northern New England wainscotted ceiling which the Commission has been able to trace is in a room on display at the Museum of the Concord Antiquarian Society (Concord, Massachusetts). This room was originally from the second floor of an early 18<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling in Hampton, New Hampshire.

Given its early date and unique internal features, the John Tarr House of Biddeford is a rare survival. That its exterior has been modified through the centuries should not militate against its entry into the National Register of Historic Places.

# 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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c.1730

Builder/Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The earliest deed to this property is one of 1654 from the original proprietor, Richard Vines, to Jane Andrews. Subsequent deeds carry the ownership to 1686 with William Dicer, father-in-law of Richard Tarr. Here a lapse occurs which coincides with the depopulation of the area during the early French and Indian wars. The next deed to appear is that from Richard Tarr to John Tarr in 1728, from which point the chain of title extends to the present.

Evidence indicates that this house was built by John Tarr shortly after his acquisition of the property, since it is mentioned in the next deed, dated 1730. Although alterations and additions have taken place, the most significant feature, a very rare panel and stile fully wainscotted (wall and ceiling) room remains. Preliminary research indicates few other examples. One exists with panelled ceiling only in the Museum of the Concord Antiquarian Society, transplanted from Hampton, New Hampshire, and one is said to exist in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, originally in a house in Kensington, New Hampshire. The panel and stile system and random width boards suggest an early date for the house.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

York Deeds, Book XIII, Fol. 183; Book XIV, Fol. 86

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property  $\frac{1}{2}$   
Quadrangle name Biddeford

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	9	3	8	6	8	9	5	4	8	1	3	6	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map 49, Lot 4

### 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, Historian/Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1980

street & number 242 State Street telephone 207/289-2133

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Carle S. Speltzworth* date 2/27/80  
title S.H.P.O.

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>Bruce Dwyer</i>	date 4/23/80
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <i>Patrick Andrus</i>	date 4/22/80
Chief of Registration	