

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lower Alewife Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number North Side of Emmons Rd, East of JCT with Route 35 Not for publication

city or town Kennebunk, vicinity

state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 04043

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Edward S. Peterson 1/26/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Burt Savage 3/24/94
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Lower Alewife Historic District
Name of Property

York, Maine
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
10	6	buildings
3		sites
		structures
		objects
13	6	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

3

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/Subsistence: Agricultural
Outbuilding
Agricultural Field

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Subsistence: Agricultural Field

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite
walls Wood/Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other One-Story Ells and Detached Barns

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Commerce
- Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

c. 1790-1943

Significant Dates

c. 1790

c. 1840

c. 1870

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Lower Alewife Historic District

Name of Property

York, Maine

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 208

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 19 373870 4811520
Zone Easting Northing

3 19 374160 4809000
Zone Easting Northing

2 19 374540 4809790

4 19 373020 4809720

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date August, 1993

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Lower Alewife Historic District consists of a row of four farmsteads on the north side of Emmons Road in the western half of the Town of Kennebunk. The district contains 208 acres between Emmons Road on the south and the Kennebunk River to the north. The eastern-most property in the district is separated by the Downing Road, running north-south, and a 9.7 acre lot on the northwest corner of that road and the southern boundary of the district. That parcel of property, originally a hillock of farmland, was destroyed for gravel during the construction of the turnpike to the east in the 1950s and thus no longer retains its historic integrity.

The district is architecturally and historically cohesive as a group of farmsteads all oriented south along the Emmons Road and all dating from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. The farmland for three of the properties extends, as it did historically, north to the Kennebunk River. The fourth property, the Seth Emmons Farm (3), has been reduced to a smaller lot but historically and visually is part of the four farmsteads. South of the Emmons Road are scattered residences on small lots which date from the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

All four farmsteads consist of wooden buildings with a house and ell and at least one barn. The houses are all nearly identical in size and plan with a two story main block and a long ell extending from the east end. With one exception all of the surviving outbuildings are located on the east side of the farmhouses.

There are 11 contributing resources in the district. Six farm buildings are not included as contributing by virtue of their age. All, however, are similar in scale and materials to the historic structures and may eventually be added to the list of historic resources.

1. **SMITH FARMSTEAD**, c.1753, c.1800
National Register (2/4/1982)

The main block of the house is a 2 1/2 story central chimney dwelling with a five bay facade. Each gable end is two bays wide and extending from the east side is a 1 1/2 story ell that has five irregularly spaced bays. The ell is set back from the plain of the front of the house.

The principal decorative feature of the exterior of the house is the doorway with its Federal style surround. This consists of a single paneled door and round arched lunette with a leaded glass design. Pilasters supporting a pediment enframe the entire opening. This design is a somewhat simplified version of a plate in Asher Benjamin's Rudiments of Architecture (1814).

Extensive remodeling evident on the exterior includes rebuilding the

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central chimney and replacement of the sash on the principal elevations. The dimensions of the original windows are unknown, but the large casings suggest six over six lights that were replaced by windows with two over two lights, which survive in a few locations on the building. The majority of windows consist of non-historic twelve over twelve sash.

The interior of the house retains many Federal style details. In plan the house has a typical "hall and parlor" arrangement with two large rooms flanking a central hallway. The hallway is shallow to allow for a steep staircase in front of the central chimney block. A particularly noteworthy feature of this space is the staircase in which the newell posts and handrailing is mirrored by moldings against the wall going up the stairs. To the left of the hallway is a parlor with simple Federal style door and window moldings, wainscott and mantelpiece. The trim in the main room behind the chimney, which also includes wainscott and mantel, has moldings with even simpler profiles. To the right of the hallway is the original kitchen with its large fireplace and bake oven. Over the mantel are six paneled cupboard doors.

The ell has been completely gutted and remodeled, leaving little evidence of original features which probably included a summer kitchen and woodshed. A doorway sheltered by a gable roof portico of recent vintage suggests changes to the fenestration of this wing as well.

On the east side of the house is a large west facing rectangular barn with its entrance on the narrow gable end. On the north side of the barn is a shed roof addition. This structure probably dates from the late nineteenth century.

James Smith of York acquired the original 50 acre lot which included this farm in 1753. According to one historical account, he erected buildings "shortly after". This has led to the assumption that the present house dates from 1753, which is not supported by existing physical evidence. All of the molded woodwork in the house is in the Federal style, and the large size of the window casings suggest a date of the early 1800s. It is possible that the original house underwent a substantial enlargement, which would explain the location of the kitchen in the main block of the house to the right of the hall instead of behind the center chimney.

James Smith left this property to his son, Nathaniel, who died in 1851 at age 74. It was probably the latter who is responsible for the Federal style improvements to the farmhouse. At his death the value of the farm was \$3,000 with 70 improved acres and 65 unimproved acres. His son, James (1819-1889), was a teacher early in his life before taking over the family farm, which by 1870 he had enlarged to 185 improved acres and 95 unimproved acres.

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He later erected a saw mill nearby on the Alewife Brook and conducted a lumber business until his accidental death in the mill in 1889. Mary P. Smith, his second wife, and Ellen, a daughter from his first marriage, were the last of the Smiths to own the farm. Ellen Smith was a school teacher in Kennebunk but kept the farm going until her death in the early part of this century.

2. WALKER-RUSSELL FARM, c.1797

The Walker-Russell Farm is a 2 1/2 story residence with a five bay facade, gable roof and large central chimney. The ell, the first section of which is 2 stories and the second section 1 1/2, extends from the east end of the main block of the house and is set well back from the plain of that facade. The house has undergone a series of remodelings which are documented in part through early photographs. Samuel Littlefield, Jr., purchased the original 40 acres in 1753, and passed it on to his son Moses in 1787. In 1797 Moses Littlefield deeded the land to Richard Gilpatrick, who in turn sold it to John Walker. Existing physical evidence, combined with the 1797 deed transfer, suggests that the house dates from shortly after Walker obtained the land. As originally built the house was a combination of late Georgian and early Federal style influences. The doorway had pilasters and a full pediment, and there were cornices over all of the windows except on the front under the eaves. These features, of which only the window cornices survive, suggest Georgian style building traditions.

The interior, which may have been gradually embellished in the years after the house was erected, has outstanding examples of Federal style ornamentation. The central hallway, located in front of the chimney block, is similar in design to the one in the Smith House (1), except that the handrail terminates in a circular newel rather than a turned post. As with the Smith House, the handrailing and newel posts further up the stairs are mirrored in the moldings along the walls, except that here there is also wainscotting. In the parlor to the left of the hallway is a mantel piece embellished with composition ornament that appears to be a composite of plates 19 and 20 in Asher Benjamin's 1797 publication, The Country Builders Assistant. Unlike the published plans, however, the mantel also features rows of dentils which are repeated in the entablature that extends around the room at ceiling level. This entablature also has a frieze with simulated triglyphs. The remainder of the trim in the room, which includes wainscot, is molded with simple profiles and may pre-date the installation of the more elaborate ornamentation.

Behind the chimney is a room with a small fireplace and simple mantel. To the right of the hall is the kitchen which, as with the Smith House, has a large fireplace and bake oven. There are pilasters flanking either side of

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the fireplace and a paneled door over the bake oven. The mantel shelf appears to be a more recent replacement.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century the original sash were replaced with a two-over-two configuration and a Greek Revival style porch was added to the west end of the house. The attached two story carriage barn on the east end of the ell probably dates from the same period. This was probably done by John Walker in the 1840s. Census data for the years 1850, 1860 and 1870 suggest that the farm was declining in size and productivity during those decades.

Eliphet Walker was the last of that family to own the farm and he acquired it in 1874 only to sell it that same year to Cyrus Russell. It was almost certainly Russell who made the next major change, which included the replacement of the narrow Georgian style door with Italianate style double doors and portico. Brackets were added to the west porch, and a connector was built to the small one story barn on the west side of the house. Also added was a porch with Italianate style brackets on front of the ell. His over-all improvements to the property increased its valuation in ten years from \$2,000 to \$4,500. Indeed, Russell evidently began the farm's increased specialization into dairy products that continued well into this century.

Very little of the Greek Revival or Italianate style changes survive, however. The two-over-two sash are extant, as is the ell porch and attached carriage barn. The west porch and connector has been completely replaced by a one story glazed porch. Another major alteration is the main entrance, which was completely replaced in the 1970s with a single door with sidelights and entablature that bears no resemblance to the original doorway. These changes were made by the present owner, who also added picture windows to the front of the ell and the rear of the house and carriage barn. Other changes include replacing the carriage barn doors with a single door and gable roof portico and conversion of that space for a day-care school.

The Walker-Russell Farm has a large barn and several outbuildings. The small barn on the west side of the house, already mentioned, may date from the early 1800s and was probably moved to its present site when the attached carriage barn was built. The hay barn, a long gable roof structure with a decorative cupola, probably also dates from the early nineteenth century. The remaining outbuildings date from the period of 1958-59 when Carl Russell, husband of the present owner, managed the farm. He built four shed-roof cattle barns on the north side of the hay barn, a half-wood half-cinder block milk shed, and a cinder block silo. These additions, although of recent construction, continue the tradition of dairy farming established by his great-grandfather in the late nineteenth century. That was Cyrus Russell, who acquired the farm in 1874. He was succeeded by his son Joshua, who left

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the property to his son Paul. Paul was the father of Carl, who ran the farm until his death in 1969.

3. SETH EMMONS FARM, 1840

John Taylor purchased the original 54 acres from Samuel Littlefield, Jr. and erected buildings on this site. Seth Emmons, who was from Lyman where he worked in a sawmill, acquired the farm from the Taylors in 1824. According to the Tobias Walker diary entry for April 27, 1840, in that year he tore down the old house and built the present Greek Revival style structure. Emmons' eldest son, Collins, later acquired the farm to the west of this one while a younger son, Seth T., inherited this property.

The house built by Seth Emmons is similar in size and proportions to the Smith (1) and Walker-Russell (2) houses. It is 2½ stories high with a five bay facade and a gable roof. Extending from its east end is a 1½ story ell set back from the facade of the main block of the house. Unlike the earlier houses, however, this structure has two chimneys, each located in a gable end, rather than a central chimney. This reflects the change in living arrangements in which the kitchen was located in the ell with a stove, rather than in the main house with a fireplace. On the exterior the principal Greek Revival style features are the large entablature with cornice returns, and the main entrance. The entrance consists of pilasters and entablature enframing a recessed doorway with sidelights. The soffits within the recessed portion are paneled, and there is fluted trim around the door and sidelights. The door itself has eight panels in four different sizes.

The most unusual feature of the interior is the main staircase. The lower portion is free-standing on axis with the door and has newell posts and handrailing on either side. It leads to a landing between the floors, then turns 90 degrees both right and left with short flights leading to chambers on either side. Directly over the hallway at the front of the house is a closet with access off the southeast bedroom.

On the ground floor are a parlor to the left of the hallway and a sitting room to the right. There are eight panel doors all through the house but the parlor is more richly embellished with Greek Revival style woodwork. The door and window trim is fluted with corner blocks, and there is a stylish mantel around the fireplace on the west wall. The moldings in this room, which also includes baseboards, are continued into the hallway.

In contrast, the sitting room and the room behind the staircase have moldings with simpler profiles and plain Greek Revival style mantels. Both of these rooms, however, have eight panel doors for two paired sets of closets, one of which has been converted into a bathroom. There is also a

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back hall leading from the room behind the staircase to the ell. A staircase to the second floor of the ell opens out into this back hall, which allows the sitting room to be closed off from the work-a-day sections of the house.

The ell itself has been entirely gutted and remodeled, leaving little evidence of the original kitchen and woodshed on the ground floor, or of the rooms for hired help above. The present owners have replaced all of the windows in this section and added an elaborate doorway on the rear which mimics the design of the main entrance. However, on the principal elevation of the ell the sliding barn doors were retained in place as blind openings. Also retained is a small recessed porch with Italianate style brackets which, along with the dormers above, were probably added in the 1850s or 1860s.

The original stable on the property was demolished several years ago, but the large hay barn, which dates from the early nineteenth century, is extant. This rectangular structure has an entrance on the narrow gable end which faces west toward the house. A small ornamented ventilator is at the peak of the roof.

Seth T. Emmons married in 1861 and later acquired the family farm. According to the 1860 census, his father left him one of the most prosperous farms in the town. It subsequently descended to his son William whose brother, Frank, helped manage the farm and the three greenhouses built on the south side of the Emmons Road. In 1901 he built a small house and devoted himself to managing the greenhouse business(not in the district.) William continued to operate the family farm and left it to his wife, Bertha, and son, Seth. Bertha Emmons sold the property in 1949 when she became too ill to continue its operation.

4. **COLLINS EMMONS FARM**, late 18th century, c.1870

The original 50 acre lot was acquired by Stephen Larrabee in 1753. According to one account, he may have built a house on this site as early as 1755. The farm passed through his descendants and in 1852 was sold by Joseph Young for \$2,000 to Seth Emmons and his two sons, Collins and Seth T. It was the elder son, Collins, who took over the stewardship of this farm.

Sometime after 1852 Collins undertook a major reconstruction of the old farmhouse and created a residence which was quite similar to his father's house. The major differences between the two Emmons houses is due to the fact that Collins was working with a small, center chimney cape which restricted the size of his improvements. For example, the Greek Revival style doorway with pilasters, sidelights and entablature is not recessed, and although the unusual staircase design of his father's was repeated, the center chimney created a very restricted space in the hallway. To the left

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of the hallway he built a parlor, but the new plaster walls and wood trim were installed over existing lath and plaster, thereby reducing the size of the room. To the right of the hallway is a sitting room, which was created out of a kitchen with its large fireplace and bake oven. This Emmons covered with a brick wall with a stove apperture. The present owners have removed that wall and exposed the old fireplace. This room also retains its wainscot, which may date from the original house.

Like his father, Collins installed a large number of closets. On the second floor over the hall at the front of the house is a closet with access off one of the two main bedrooms. On the ground floor are pairs of closets off the room behind the center chimney and off the sitting room (along with stairs to the cellar). When Collins Emmons enlarged the house he left the second floor unfinished except for the two main bedrooms. These unfinished spaces were not made habitable until the 1970s.

The moldings in the house are all very simple and in the spirit of his father's Greek Revival style house. The only major exception are the two newel posts for the main staircase, which are heavily turned and characteristic of the post-Civil War period. Another difference is that the recessed porch on the ell has Italianate corner brackets but no posts. Collins Emmons also probably raised the foundation of the original house by constructing several courses of brickwork with granite facing. The improvements in the valuation of his farm between the 1870 and 1880 censuses also suggest that the remodelings took place at that time.

The property also included a hay barn on the opposite side of the road which burned a few years ago. On the east end of the house is a 2½ story stable built into the side of a hill so that the hay could be transported directly into the second floor level and dropped down to the animals in the level below. This gable roof structure probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century. It has clapboard siding and a ornamental ventilator. Alongside this stable is a one story hay barn with vertical siding and a gable roof that was constructed in 1980.

Collins Emmons left the farm to his son, John Collins Emmons. John C. Emmons kept the farm going but had a career as a editor of the Kennebunkport summer newspaper, The Wave. He later worked in Boston, commuting daily. It was probably he who added the brick porch on the west side (since demolished), and the brick stoop for the main entrance.

The present owners have extensively remodeled the ell, leaving little evidence of original features. On the exterior the clapboards were completely replaced, and unfortunately this included the false window over the main entrance. Although permanently closed with louvered blinds, this window was important to maintain the symmetry of the fenestration.

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The Lower Alewife Historic District contains four farmsteads and over two hundred acres of farmland and woodlots which represents the most intensive period of agricultural activity in Kennebunk from the late 18th century to the early part of this century. Located 4 miles northwest of the village center, the Alewife Historic District contains farms that were first settled in the 1750s. The district has a natural northern boundary in the Kennebunk River, and more recently has been separated from the village on the east by the Maine Turnpike. These farmsteads, and the large parcels of land included in the district, represent an important agricultural legacy for Kennebunk. The district meets criteria A and C for its association with local patterns of agriculture, commerce, community development, and for the architectural significance of the component buildings.

The first settlement of the area of Kennebunk known as the "Alewife" did not occur until the 1750s. It was in that decade that lots averaging 50 acres were sold on the south side of the Kennebunk River. Alewife, a name derived from the small fish of the same name, has traditionally been applied to the northwest corner of the township that extends between the Kennebunk River and the Alewife Brook. This rural area with scattered farmsteads has terrain with no major hills or valleys. Historical accounts have made a distinction between upper and lower Alewife as separate communities. With its close proximity to Kennebunk and the Maine Turnpike, the lower Alewife has gradually changed with the introduction of new housing on small lots on what historically was farmland and woodlots. The existence of large open land between the houses and the Kennebunk River distinguishes the properties in the district from the surrounding areas.

The men who first acquired the four farmsteads in the historic district—James Smith, Samuel Littlefield, Jr., Stephen Larrabee, and John Taylor—improved the land and erected buildings. Little evidence remains, however, of the earliest structures. That the farms in this area became prosperous is evident in the large houses that were built by the early 1800s, those of James Smith and John Walker. Both are a full two stories high with large rooms and Federal style woodwork which is testimony to an ability to improve their properties. The earlier structures on the two Emmons farms were replaced or remodeled toward the middle of the nineteenth century and, as with the other two, we can only guess at their size and configurations. That portions of the earlier structures may have been used in enlarging the existing houses, however, suggests that even in the eighteenth century the first farmsteads were relatively substantial.

The earliest record we have of the nature of the agricultural activity at these farms is the 1850 census, by which time three of the original 50 acre farmsteads had been substantially enlarged. In 1860 the farms of James Smith, Collins Emmons and John Walker all had 30-40 acres of improved land

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and about the same amount in unimproved land. Seth Emmons, with 75 acres of improved land and 75 acres of unimproved land, was the most prosperous, and this is reflected in his house, which was the newest and most fashionable. The crops produced were corn, oats, peas and beans, potatoes, and hay. Dairy products, such as butter, were also important. Sheep were kept on three of the farms in 1850, but were gradually eliminated over the next two decades.

By the early 1800s both the upper and lower Alewife communities were sufficiently well defined to have had their own schools and churches. The close proximity to Kennebunk village, however, meant that in the lower Alewife section no separate commercial centers developed to serve the surrounding farms. Before the construction of the Maine Turnpike, the Emmons Road extended from the Alewife Road to Bartletts Mills and Kennebunk Village. Improvements in transportation further eroded any need for separate community services and by 1900 the local congregation had dissolved and the church building taken down.

Not fully indicated in the census data is the importance of lumber harvesting. Each farm had as much as half of its land set aside for woodlots. The important of lumbering for the farms of this region is less well understood by historians. As one scholar has pointed out, "Lumbering and occupations associated with wood products were consistently the largest source of vital outside income to support the New England farmer. A majority of eighteenth- nineteenth-, and twentieth-century New England farmers could even be called summer farmers and winter woodsmen, so important was the cash generated by lumbering activities."¹ For the farms in the Lower Alewife Historic District lumber was milled locally or transported down the Kennebunk River to William Bartlett's saw mill. That this was an important source of income for these farms as late as the 1920s is supported by the recollections of Franklin Emmons, who was born in 1905 and worked on all four of the farms in the historic district. It is also supported by the career of James Smith, who, at the end of his life, built a sawmill on the Alewife Brook and whose biographical account in one 1896 publication listed his occupation as lumber manufacturer.

Continued diversification was essential for most farms in southern Maine and the ones in this district were no exception. By the early 1900s the need for other sources of income affected the owners of all of these farms. Collins Emmons' son John had a career as a newspaper editor, and later commuted to Boston each day. Ellen Smith, the daughter of the deceased

¹ Hubka, Thomas, Big House, Back House, Little House, Barn, The Connected Farm of New England, University of New England Press, 1986, p.192.

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lumber manufacturer James Smith, taught school in Kennebunk. Seth Emmons constructed three greenhouses across the road from his farm in the 1890s. In every case, however, the farmland continued to be harvested in much the same manner as it had before. The last major effort to expand the operations of one of these farms was in the late 1950s when Carl Russell constructed several new buildings for his dairy farm.

The four farms in the Lower Alewife Historic District were never built as connected farms, as was so common in much of southern Maine. They are, however, each oriented in a similar fashion toward the road, as are several others in this area. The long perpendicular ells for each house extend toward the barns which face them on three of the farms. These ells were the working center of the house and were in close proximity to the barns and other outbuildings. The exception to this was the Collins Emmons farm where the barn (destroyed) was located across the road opposite the house. In this instance the terrain probably dictated that a location for the barn be situated across the road where the land was flat. The stable which Collins Emmons built is adjacent to the end of the ell, and a desire to take advantage of the terrain by building into the side of the hill to access the second floor at grade determined the location of this building. What was critical in the operation of all of these farms was that the horse and oxen, with their skids for hauling lumber, were in close proximity to the road for easy access during the winter.

The significance of the farms in the Lower Alewife Historic District is largely due to their shared history, use, and similarities in layout and plan. The significance is also due to the large quantity of open land which survives between the houses and the Kennebunk River. The small district thereby represents in an area of intensive recent development an historic agricultural landscape whose components illustrate important patterns of rural life in southern Maine during the nineteenth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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LOWER ALEWIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT

York, Maine

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Atlas of York County, Maine, Sanford, Everts & Company, Philadelphia, 1872.

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U. S. Census Data: 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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LOWER ALEWIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT

YORK, MAINE

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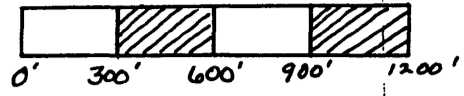
Boundary Description

See map.

Boundary Justification

The Lower Alewife Historic District is a discontinuous area embracing 208 acres associated with four farm compounds. Three of the properties lie adjacent to each other with their long narrow lots extending in a northeasterly direction from the district's southern boundary (Emmons Road) to the northern edge (Kennebunk River). However, the very northern tip of property associated with the Smith Homestead (1), is separated from the balance by a 300 foot wide Central Maine Power Company electrical transmission line corridor. While the omission of the non-historic power line is desirable, inclusion of the isolated property is important because it underscores the continued existence of the historic lot lines of this farm. The fourth property is separated from the others by a distance of at least 270 feet between which is a wedge-shaped parcel of property that has been consumed by a gravel pit. It is the presence of these two extensive, highly intrusive, and non-historic features of the landscape which dictate and justify the establishment of a discontinuous district.

LOWER ALEWIVE HISTORIC DISTRICT
KENNEBUNK VIC., MAINE



SCALE: 1/2" = 300'

