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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

FEB 22 1993  
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 Murch Family House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Southeast Side of Calderwood Neck, 2 miles Northeast of North Haven Road  N/A not for publication

city or town Vinalhaven  vicinity

state Maine code ME county Knox code 013 zip code 04863

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.)

*James S. Fritterwood* 2/17/93  
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:)

Signature of the Keeper *Shelley Sykes* **entered in the National Register** Date of Action 3/25/93

Murch Family House  
Name of Property

Knox, 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	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
Agriculture/Subsistence/Animal Facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Camp

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-Nineteenth Century Greek Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Granite

roof Asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1852-59

**Significant Dates**

c. 1855

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Murch, William, Mason

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Murch Family House  
Name of Property

Knox, Maine  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 127

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	5 1 4 5 6 0	4 8 8 2 7 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 January, 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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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetMURCH HOUSE *KNOX CO ME*Section number 7 Page 2

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The Murch House is situated on a remote peninsula in the northeast section of the island of Vinalhaven. With its rocky, irregular shoreline, Vinalhaven has numerous small islands on narrow inlets penetrating deep into the center of the island. For this reason most houses are sited along the shore and at the end of narrow unpaved roads. The Murch House is located on a small point of land which is part of the larger peninsula known as Calderwood Neck. The only access road winds down to the house by following the natural contours of the land.

The house is constructed of ashlar granite blocks and is one-and-one-half stories high with a gable roof. The mortar joints are wide and filled with numerous repointings with no apparent evidence of their original profiles. On the long west elevation is the main entrance flanked by sidelights. This doorway is not visible from the exterior due to the recent addition of a shed roof vestibule of plywood construction. On the east side of the house is a back door to the kitchen which has no sidelights.

The windows are six-over-six double-hung sash. These are asymmetrically arranged on all but the south gable end, which is the elevation facing the water. The only wood trim on the exterior is the thin cornice which terminates in small returns in each gable end. A single brick chimney rises in the center of the house just forward of the west slope of the roof.

The interior first floor has four rooms arranged in a grid pattern, separated by partitions of wood and plaster. The staircase to the second floor is located against the north wall in the room entered through the main entrance. In the southwest corner is the parlor with its high fireplace surround built to receive a stove-hole rather than a hearth. In the northeast corner is the kitchen with its separate entrance on the east side. On the second floor are three chambers, one of which opens off the hall at the head of the stairs. The woodwork throughout the house is plain with no molded profiles. Like the ogee-shaped window muntins it is consistent with the mid-nineteenth century construction date of the house.

Alterations to the interior include the application of "Beaver Board" paneling to the walls and ceilings, the installation of a bathroom in the 1960s, and kitchen cabinets constructed about the same time.

The property also includes a timber-frame barn which dates from the nineteenth century. This one-and-one-half-story building is constructed in a salt-box configuration with wood shingle siding. There are six-over-six double-hung sash and plank doors hung on strap hinges. Because it is constructed on a large ledge, the rear of the barn projects over the sloping terrain and is supported partially by a granite wall and partially by piers constructed of granite blocks. In the center of the rear (south) elevation

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MURCH HOUSE *R16x* *Ca m 6*

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is a narrow projection that contains the out-house.

The barn is located in front of and perpendicular to the house to create a small courtyard. The reason it is located on the south side instead of the north is to provide shelter from the windows probably due to the hilly terrain which restricted its siting.

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Continuation SheetMURCH HOUSE *RNOX Co ME*Section number 8 Page 2

The Murch Family House is the only granite dwelling on Vinalhaven, an island whose chief economic importance in the nineteenth century was the granite industry. It was built by a local mason at a time when the granite quarries were just beginning to develop national markets for building stone and monuments. In addition to it being an unusual example of vernacular architecture, the house and its nearby barn together exemplify conditions of subsistence farming on Maine islands in the nineteenth century. The property is eligible for listing in the Register under criteria A and C.

William Murch settled on Vinalhaven in the 1830s, moving there from an unidentified location on the mainland. Little is known about him except that by the 1850 census he was listed as a mason living with his wife, Rebecca, and five children. At that time his eldest son, Isaac, age twenty-six, was a fisherman and along with his wife Bianca, lived with his father. According to family tradition William built the stone house for Isaac using stone quarried from a nearby point of land called "Starboard Rock". Isaac and Bianca were deeded two acres of land in 1855 shortly after the birth of their first child, Albert. The house was probably built at that time. It was certainly completed by 1860 when it was valued at \$500.00. By that time William was apparently deceased and according to the 1859 county map, his widow and three small children lived close by. It is said that William built one other stone house on the island, but it burned in the 1930s.

Little more is known about Isaac Murch except that he was the first of a long line of fisherman to occupy the house. In 1861 he was well enough regarded to be chosen selectman to fill an unexpired term, and during the Civil War he served as a Lieutenant. Isaac Murch was killed at Ft. Donaldson in 1863 and the property descended to his wife and two sons. By 1870, however, she had left the island and it is not clear who occupied the house.

A nephew of Isaac, Edward Murch, is the next family member known to have resided there. He left the property to his two sons, Fred and Freeland, and a maiden daughter, Nell, who took care of them. The last of these three, Fred, obtained clear title and deeded the house to his niece, Gladys Bradstreet, who married Valois Young. These were the parents of the present owners. Valois Young, Sr., was the last to live there year-round and died in the house a few years ago.

All of the Murches were fishermen, harvesting lobster and any kind of fish for which there was a market. They generally kept a few animals in the barn, such as cows, chickens, sheep, and horses. There was an apple orchard and small plots of vegetable gardens scattered all over the property wherever enough soil could be found. The use of the house, barn, and land thus exemplified the traditions of subsistence farming common to islands off the Maine coast where natural resources were not found in abundance.

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MURCH HOUSE *KNOX Co ME*

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The house remains little changed from the period of its last year-round occupant. It is now used for only a few weeks during the summer.

The property's architectural significance centers on its construction of granite blocks. Although this stone has long been associated with Maine and was a major export industry, relatively few stone houses were built in this state. Other examples listed in the National Register include the Stone House in Bridgton (N.R. 7/19/84), the Theodore Jellison House in Calais (N.R. 11/23/84), the Mosquito Island House (N.R. 9/29/83), and the Nelson Farm (N.R. 12/17/92). Only the latter structure is significant for ornamental detail, however, as these granite buildings are traditionally simply fashioned out of granite blocks.



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MURCH HOUSE *KAWA COME*

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U. S. Census, Vinalhaven, Waldo County, 1840, 1850, 1860.

Register of Probate and Registry of Deeds, Knox County.

Brief Historical Sketch of Vinalhaven, Rockland, 1900.

Map of Waldo County, 1859.

Interview of Valois Young, Jr., December 3, 1993.

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MURCH FAMILY HOUSE *KNOX CO ME*  
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies a portion of the Town of Vinalhaven Tax Map 9, Lot 78. See map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary embraces a 1.7-acre island lot associated with the Murch House since 1855.

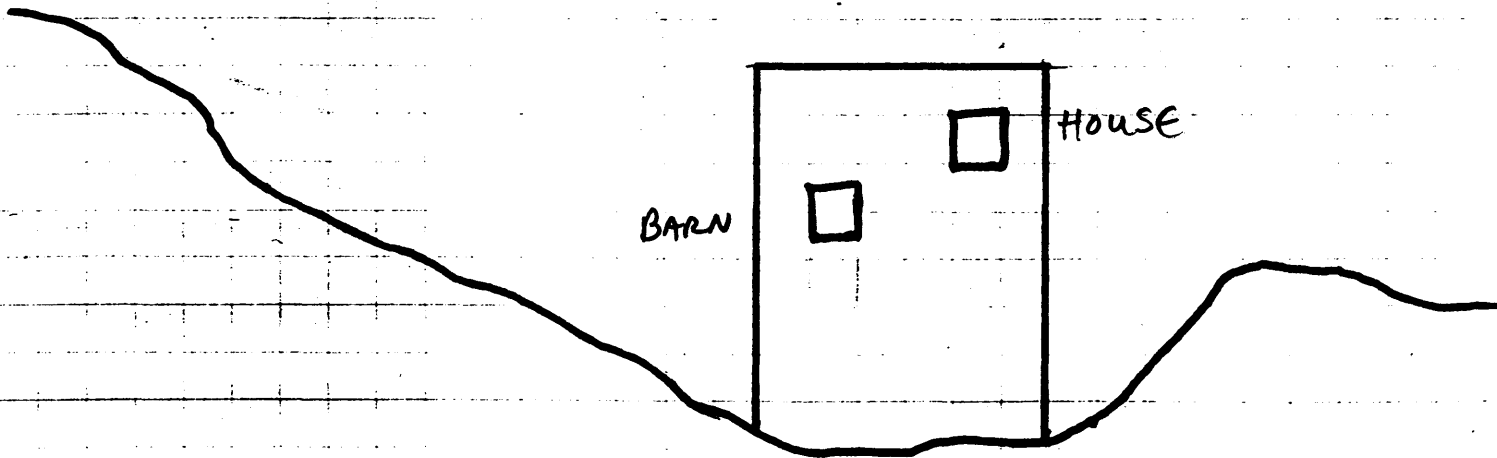
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

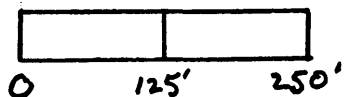
MURCH FAMILY HOUSE *KNOX CO ME*

KNOX, MAINE

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MURCH FAMILY HOUSE  
VINALHAVEN VIC., MAINE



SCALE: 1.5" = 250'