



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Bernett, Nathaniel and Elizabeth, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number West Side of Crockett Ridge Road, 1.4 Miles
North of Junction with Route 117 N/A not for publication

city or town Norway vicinity

state Maine code ME county Oxford code 017 zip code 04268

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 J. [Signature] JHPD 5/3/96
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:)

Edson H. Beal
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6/7/96

Entered in the
National Register.

Bennett, Nathaniel & Elizabeth, House
Name of Property

Oxford, 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)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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/Agricultural
Outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite
walls Wood/Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other Modern ell connected to English style barn

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)

Architecture

Art

Period of Significance

c. 1792

c. 1812

c. 1830

Significant Dates

c. 1792

c. 1812

c. 1830

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Bennett, Nathaniel & Elizabeth, House
Name of Property

Oxford, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 48 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	374325	4898930
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	19	374440	4898380

3	19	374180	4898270
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	19	373820	4898720

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 Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1996

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Sta. 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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**BENNETT, NATHANIEL AND ELIZABETH, HOUSEOXFORD, MAINESection number 7 Page 23

The Bennett house is a two-story, five-bay Federal period frame dwelling that is sheathed in weatherboards. It is two rooms deep, and it rests on a granite block foundation. A two-story ell links the house to an English style barn. The house is located on a forty-eight acre parcel of land that is the remainder of the farm historically associated with the property. According to tradition, the front four rooms of the house were built about 1792, and the back half was added in 1812. It also appears that additional changes were made around 1830.

Facing south, the symmetrically arranged front elevation is composed of a central doorway that is flanked by a four nine-over-six double hung sash windows, two on each side. The doorway itself features a six-panel door framed by sidelights and narrow pilasters with short fluted caps, the whole of which is surmounted by a wide frieze and broad cornice. The five second story windows (the center one of which is a smaller six-over-six) are positioned on axis with the openings below. A boxed cornice carries across the elevation. Two large chimneys punctuate the roof ridge at a point several feet in from the endwalls.

The fenestration pattern of the west gable end is comprised of widely separated nine-over-six windows and a central doorway on the first story; a pair of second story windows positioned over those on the first story; and two full size windows in the gable peak. The doorway matches the one on the facade. In contrast to the west end, the east gable end features a single window and a side doorway on the first story, two windows above the lower level openings, and one window in the peak. The ell spans about three-quarters of the rear elevation on which there are three windows: one near the northeast corner of the first story; a second larger one immediately above it; and a small second story opening about one-quarter of the way in from the northwest corner.

The present ell was constructed in the mid 1980s to replace an earlier one that was probably considerably narrower. It has three windows on the east side, and several windows and a door on the west side, the latter of which opens onto a deck. At the northwest corner of the ell where it meets the barn, the ell rises to a full two stories. The barn features two small windows and a large central opening on its west side, over which is a projecting gabled hood. A second, somewhat smaller opening, is located on the west side along with a pair of small six-pane windows. The north gable end of the barn is sheathed in wood-shingles and has a small six-pane window in the peak.

In plan, the Bennett house exhibits an interior arrangement that is fairly typical for houses of this period and size in Maine. A central stair hall provides access to the two front parlor rooms as well as

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BENNETT, NATHANIEL AND ELIZABETH, HOUSE

OXFORD, MAINE

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two rooms at the rear. There are four bedrooms on the second floor. Each of the first and second story front rooms features raised paneling on the fireplace wall between entry and closet doors, horizontal board wainscot that is capped by a chair rail, four-panel raised panel doors attached with wrought iron H-hinges, and typical Federal style door and window surrounds. The hallway on both the first and second stories is finished with wide horizontal boards (in contrast to the plaster over lath employed elsewhere), and the stair has thin square newel posts and balusters. In contrast to the front rooms, the back rooms in the front block of the house are considerably more modest in their finish.

In addition to the well preserved plan and woodwork of the interior, the southwest room on the first story contains decorative stencils on three of the four walls above the chair rail. In this composition, a sky blue background is over painted with horizontally arranged rows of flower stems that are comprised of two buds (portions of which are carefully shaded and highlighted) and a group of two leaves, each of which is separated by a small daisy-like yellow flower. The stenciling was discovered under wallpaper that was removed in the 1970s during a major rehabilitation of the house.

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Believed to have been initially constructed in 1792 and then enlarged in 1812, the Bennett house is a two-story, Federal style frame dwelling whose modern ell extends to an English style barn that may be contemporary with the house. It was part of a 150 acre farm that was first occupied by Nathaniel and Elizabeth Bennett who had removed from New Gloucester, Maine. The house is eligible for nomination to the Register under Criterion C both for its local architectural significance, and its importance in art which derives from the preservation in one room of unusual decorative stenciling.

The area that would be incorporated as the Town of Norway in 1797 was initially settled by Anglo-Americans in the fall of 1786 by people from the Cumberland County towns of Gray and New Gloucester. These first pioneers were followed in 1790 by twin brothers Anthony and Nathaniel Bennett who purchased adjoining lots (Anthony's was to the south of his brother's) and apparently erected dwellings to which they brought their families in 1791 and 1793, respectively. Nathaniel Bennett (1770-1855) had married Elizabeth Blake (1769-1856), the sister of Anthony Bennett's wife, and they both lived in this house until their deaths. Since the Bennetts did not have any children, the property descended to their eight nephews and nieces who sold it in 1857 to Edwin A. Morse. Morse occupied the farm for the duration of his life, and thereafter it was acquired by Don Carlos Seitz, the former editor, assistant publisher and general manager of the *New York World* newspaper.

Don Carlos Seitz appears to have acquired the property for use as a gentleman's farm, since he is said to have done much to preserve the old buildings and also erected a large barn (only its foundation remains) to the north of the English style barn. In addition, he named the property "Cedarbrook Farm", a designation by which it is still commonly known in Norway. In 1927 Seitz's estate sold the farm to one of his hired hands, Ernest Hutchins who, with his wife June, operated the property as a tourist home on the grounds of which they erected several cottages (none of which is extant) for guests. It was twice transferred before the present owner acquired the property in 1974.

According to an article about Nathaniel Bennett that was published in the *Norway Advertiser* in the late nineteenth century, the Bennett house as originally constructed was a two-story building that was a single room deep. For reasons that are not known, this house is said to have been virtually doubled in size in 1812, thus achieving its present appearance. It is impossible at this time to observe any structural evidence of this expansion, although it is interesting to note that raised paneling is utilized only on the fireplace walls of the front four rooms (two on each story) and not in the back rooms. Furthermore, judging from the Greek Revival appearance of the front and west gable end doorways, as well as one mantelpiece in a first floor back room, it is evident that a remodeling occurred about 1830.

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BENNETT, NATHANIEL AND ELIZABETH, HOUSE

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This architectural updating may have taken place at the same time that the stenciled wall decoration was added to the southwest first floor room, although there is no documentation to support or deny any relationship between these two events. Whatever its precise history may be, the main block of the Bennett house stands as a virtually intact example of a well finished rural Maine farmhouse dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The stenciling is a highly significant feature of the Bennett house, in that it is a distinctive example of this form of early nineteenth century interior decoration that was applied to numerous Maine houses. On an annual basis, new reports of the discovery of stencils or more elaborate wall murals are made to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, thereby underscoring both the popularity and relatively wide geographic distribution of this art form. Most stenciled interiors are related to the so-called "Eaton Style" of design, in that the composition and stencil patterns are based on the work of the New Hampshire itinerant artist Moses Eaton. In contrast, the stencils found at the Bennett house are quite different. Here, a sky blue background is overpainted with horizontally arranged rows of flower stems that are comprised of two buds (portions of which are carefully shaded and highlighted) and a group of two leaves, each of which is separated by a small daisy-like yellow flower. Unfortunately, no documentation has been discovered to indicate when this decoration was applied or by whom. The c.1830 date is suggested based upon the well established period in which this decorative technique was popular in Maine. Furthermore, the architectural changes that appear to have been made to the house at about this time may coincide with the stenciling. Taken together, these alterations reflect a noteworthy effort to update the stylistic appearance of the house's interior and exterior.

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BENNETT, NATHANIEL AND ELIZABETH, HOUSE

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Bibliography:

Bennett, Randall H. *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture*. Bethel, Maine: Oxford County Historic Resource Survey. 1984.

Bradbury, Dr. Osgood N. *Norway in The Forties*. Edited by Rev. Don L. McAllister. Norway, Maine: Twin Town Graphics. 1986.

Lapham, William B. *The History of Norway, Maine*. A reprinting of the 1886 edition on the occasion of the Town's Bicentennial Year. Somersworth, New Hampshire: New England History Press. 1986.

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BENNETT, NATHANIEL AND ELIZABETH, HOUSE

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property of forty-eight (48) acres occupies the Town of Norway tax map 6, lot 83.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary embraces the remaining property (most of which is reforested) that is historically and presently associated -- through common ownership -- with the Bennett House.