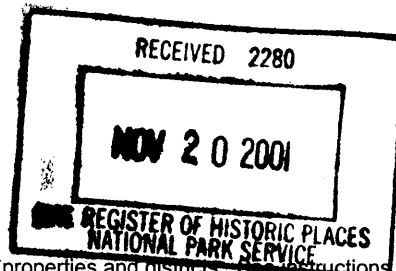


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1421

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 Ropes End

other names/site number Curtis Cottage

2. Location

street & number 36 Hyde Road N/A not for publication

city or town Phippsburg N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Sagadahoc code 023 zip code 04562

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.)

[Signature] 11/9/01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

State or 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 this 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] 12/31/01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall

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	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Camp

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Camp

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Shingle Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Wood / Shingle
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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Social History

Period of Significance

1898-1914

Significant Dates

1898

1904

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 a 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .61

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	4 3 2 6 1 0	4 8 4 1 2 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2			
---	--	--	--

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 Christi Mitchell, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 2001

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

Description

Ropes End is a rambling Shingle Style summer cottage located within a small enclave of summer residences constructed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries on the Small Point peninsula in the town of Phippsburg. The east-facing, three story frame structure sits about 100 yards west of Sea Wall beach, and is surrounded by stone walls, and mature beach and oak trees. The entire structure is clothed in unpainted cedar shingles and roofed with asphalt shingles. Dark blue painted trim outlines the windows, roof and several of the cross gables. The foundation, accessed through a door on the south side, is fieldstone.

The central mass of the structure is a rectangular block running south to north. It is three stories high, five bays wide and surmounted by a salt box gable roof the ridge of which runs east-west. A brick chimney protrudes through roof along the south wall. On each side of the central mass appendages are attached.

Starting on the eastern facade, a three story octagonal tower anchors the south end of a wrap-around porch. The porch is under a shed roof except on the north end where it is capped with a ½ story cross gable. The north facade contains a shed dormer on the east end at the second floor level with a small cross gable dormer protruding from the main roof on the third floor directly over the shed dormer. A rectangular appendage capped by a ½ story cross gable is located at the northwest corner of the central mass. Another rectangular appendage projects to the west, however, when viewed from west, the central mass is seen to have two projecting appendages. The first, already mentioned is 2 stories under a gable roof, with the ridge running east-west. The second story overhangs the first story slightly on the western side. The second appendage on this side is a bump-out attached to the south west corner of the central mass. This consists of a one story rectangular block projecting to the west, which is surmounted by a round turret on the second floor, which in turn is topped with a cross gabled roof running east-west. Finally, the southern elevation is relatively flat faced compared to the other sides: the only projections are the aforementioned tower on the south east corner and a shed dormer on the third floor in the center of the block.

The fenestration pattern is irregular. In general, the windows are six-over-one, six-over-twos, or eight-over-twos, with larger windows occurring on the bottom floor and the smallest windows on the top. Specialty windows abound. The southwest bump-out contains three ribbon windows, six-over-one, on the west elevation first floor, and a pair of two attached and curved six-over-one windows in the turret. A pair of large leaded, diamond pattern casement windows are found on the first floor south wall. Smaller diamond pattern casement windows are located on the north end of the east facade, and in the second floor shed dormer on the north side. Also, a one-over-one and two four-over-one windows are found on the north wall of the northwest appendage. All of the windows thus far described appear to be original to the structure and in their original location, with the possible exception of the one-over-one on the north elevation. New single pane ribbon windows have been added to the west and east sides of the northern most of the west side additions, and also between it and the bump-out on this side. A new two-car garage is also attached to this appendage. The wrap-around porch originally continued along the south side of the building, but it was removed in the mid-1930's. A carriage house located to the south west of the cottage was removed in 1989 and replaced with a barn-like, year round house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

The floor plan of the interior consists of large open public spaces and discreet work spaces. The main entrance to the house is located in the center of the eastern facade, under the now screened in porch. The six panel Dutch door leads into a stair hall; the mahogany stairs rise to the north, beyond which is a small room previously utilized as a work space by the servants and now used as a bar. To the south of the entry opens the expansive living room. The central feature of the room is the large painted brick fireplace on the south wall, as well as the five sided tower and a diamond pane window. These rooms are finished, as are all the other rooms in the house, in wide, painted, horizontal tongue and groove paneling and hardwood floors. Most of the first floor ceilings featured cased joists, with tongue and groove paneling between; on the upper floors the cases are eliminated but the paneling remains. Through a door on the west end of the living room is the dining room (southern bump-out on west side). This room contains one of the diamond casement windows, a stepped brick fireplace, and a c. 1930's corner cupboard. On the walls, vertical tongue and groove paneling rises about five feet from the floor and is capped with a modified crown molding which forms high narrow shelves for plates. A small passage containing a cast-iron sink leads from dining room, along the back wall of the stairs, to the kitchen and laundry room (northern appendage on west side), a door to the west side of the house, and the breakfast nook (the north west corner appendage on the north side). A door on the east wall of the breakfast nook gives access to the back servants stair and the front service room.

Four regular bedrooms (one with a fire place) and a bath with original marble fixtures, tile, knee-wall drawers, and vertical paneling open off the second floor stair hall. With the exception of carpet in two bedrooms, these rooms are also finished in horizontal boarding and hardwood floors. The banisters, railing and stairs are unpainted hardwood, possibly mahogany. Another stair rises from the south side of the hallway giving access to a bath and two bedrooms on the third floor. Two additional bedrooms, a bathroom and back stair are located over the kitchen appendage; these are finished much more plainly and were used by the servants. A door in the hallway separate these rooms from the others on the second floor. The servants were summoned through the use of a bell system and several of the rooms still contain the wall-mounted call buttons.

The structure exhibits a high degree of integrity, both on the exterior and interior, the removal of part of the porch and the addition of the garage notwithstanding. Th only other changes evident include the addition of electricity in the 1930's, and a small expansion of the kitchen area and addition of new windows in the kitchen. On the exterior, portions of the original porch floor have been overlain with a new composite decking material, and the porch has been screened in. The structure has never been winterized and is still used only seasonally.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed c. 1898 the Ropes End Cottage (currently known as the Curtis Cottage) is a large Shingle Style frame building. It is one of a number of cottages that form a small summer colony at Small Point in the town of Phippsburg, and its style is characteristic of turn of the century summer homes in Maine. It is eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion A as an example of an upperclass summer coastal residence and criterion C for its local architectural significance.

The history of Ropes End is intricately linked to the emergence of the summer cottage colony at Small Point, and reflects the culture of the nouveau riche from the Bath area. Small Point is the most southerly point in Phippsburg, a north-south peninsula that is bordered by the Kennebec River to the east, the Meadows River to the west and the Gulf of Maine on the South. The Popham Colony at the mouth of the Kennebec is one of the earliest settlements on the Eastern seaboard, and supported a small but successful population of farmers, shipbuilders, and sea captains through the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of the most successful sea-faring families in Phippsburg were the Lowells who built their homestead on the east side of Cape Small in 1829. By 1885 Captain Abner Lowell retired, and in preparation for moving to California he sold his home and all the land on the eastern side of Cape Small Point to the Honorable Joseph Robinson Bodwell, former governor of Maine and his partner Melville B. Spinney, who planned a small summer development (Gilman, p. 9, 12).

” It was one of the most spectacular parcels on the Maine Coast, even more so at that time since most of the land had been cleared of trees, some of it being used to pasture sheep and cattle, and sweeping views of the ocean were everywhere. No doubt Bodwell and Spinney envisioned a new Bar Harbor as they laid out a network of roads connecting dozens of cottage lots. The Club Road was built in 1884. The road to the beach (now Hyde Road) was already in existence.” (A Centennial History of The Small Point Club: 1897-1997.)

Their's was not an isolated undertaking. Bodwell and Spinney were well aware of the potential for development on the Maine coast. In addition to Bar Harbor, other communities including York, Isleboro, North Haven, and Camden were already attracting summer people. The Maine coast had been attracting artists for decades and soon, middle and upper class city residents, buoyed by a generous economy, and tired of increasing immigration and degenerating city air were transported to the mountains and coast by the expanding railways. To accommodate, Spinney initially put an addition on his home (the 1829 Lowell cape) to serve meals to tourists, and soon was offering seasonal accommodations. In 1885 the Bath Independent appraised the community of the pleasant meals to be had at Spinneys and put in a plug for development plans as well. “Mr. Bodwell will build two cottages on the height of land. Buckboards will be run regularly to Bath. Several persons are about to buy land from him. It is the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

general hope that another Bar Harbor will eventually be established on Cape Small Point. The idea is to develop summer cottages rather than hotels." (Bath Independent, Sept 12, 1885, in Gilman, p. 28) One of the first cottages, the Manley cottage (NR 1/7/98) was erected in 1887-88. By the 1890's Spinney and Bodwell had acquired several more partners and sold several more parcels.

In 1891 Bodwell et al sold about an half acre lot to William G. and Mary L. Reed of Boston. The lot was on the east side of Hyde Road, and was bounded on the north by a number of lots owned by Arthur Sewall of Bath. Perhaps the success of resort towns like Bar Harbor no longer appealed to the partners for each deed, including the Reed's, contained the following clause:

"This conveyance is made subject to the restrictions that neither the granted premises nor any part thereof nor any building or place thereon shall be occupied or used for the sale or traffic in intoxicating liquors or as a place of trade of public traffic of any kind or as a theatre or other place of public amusement or as a hotel or as a stable other than for the private use of the occupants thereof."

The partners also reserved for themselves the right to any minerals (sea coal) washed up on the property. In 1895 the Reed's expanded their lot by purchasing a small amount of the adjacent property from Arthur Sewall. That same year Reed became one of the founding members of the Small Point Club, which shortly thereafter constructed a club house with dining facilities and accommodations just several hundred yards from the Reed's property. It is possible the Reeds stayed at the Club until construction began on their house around 1898. Most of the other summer neighbors were business men of standing from Bath, and included the families of George F. Manson, and Dr. Samuel Anderson, bankers, John O. Patten, owner of the *Bath Independent* newspaper and founder of the Bath Water Supply Company, and Arthur Sewall, head of the Arthur Sewall & Co. shipyard. Most of the cottages built during the 1890's featured rambling wraparound porches to take in the view and the air, although Col. B.F. Watson a lawyer from New York built himself an octagonal shaped cottage.

Commencing in 1901 the Reeds began to mortgage the Small Point property, selling a first mortgage to N.E. Anderson for \$1000, and a year later mortgaging the property again to Alfred S. Clark of Lyman Massachusetts for \$8000. Anderson let the cottage out to Oscar Trufant Sewall, either on her behalf or for the Reeds, starting at least in 1903, and in 1904 Sewall assumed both mortgages. Oscar T. Sewall was a successful shipping and commission merchant out of New York, San Francisco and Honolulu for the company of William Dimond & Co.; he was a Bath native and the nephew of Arthur Sewall. His personal correspondence reflects the perils of shipping during the Spanish-American War, the battles over resources in Hawaii and Cuba, and his intense involvement in the stock market, where he invested on behalf of his family, and the Sewall shipyard. Letters to his brother Samuel Sewall in Bath also chart the preparations for moving his family from New Jersey to Small Point for the summer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

We will have considerable baggage and I would like you to arrange with Mason for a double horse truck (or a single horse truck, if it will do after he sees the baggage) to leave after the arrival of the noon train from Boston, on which I expect three of our servants to arrive, one nurse only coming along with us. It will be necessary for us to have our baggage at Small Point that same night, as we are obliged to supply some of our bedding this year.

I would also like you to arrange with your stableman for a conveyance to take us down after lunch on the 6th, or possibly earlier, and to hold four adults and the two children, and another conveyance to take the three servants down on the arrival of the noon train. It will be necessary for us to get them down there as soon as possible and it will not do to wait for the afternoon stage....

May I also ask you to see Sprague and arrange for him to supply us with milk, the same as last year, delivering some on the 6th after we arrive, and also see Wyman and have him fill the ice chest on the 6th, and ask Coombs to have the coal and wood put in and, if necessary, have John cut up some kindling. ... (Also) if you could arrange with one of these men to have a fire in the range and be present on our arrival, I would appreciate it, and then I can make what arrangements are necessary after I arrive.

(Letter to Samuel S. Sewall, June 24th, 1904)

Sewall purchased the cottage in August 1904; it offered his family a pleasant summer atmosphere with access to a social circle that included the extended Sewall family, and room for the servants. In addition, it offered him a chance to enhance his business connections in the important ship building center of Bath. By the next spring Sewall had work done on the cottage, however the details are missing. Sewall offered to share his cottage with others of the Sewall clan before his family arrived. As he was also constructing a new house in New Jersey he made plans to cut back on other expenses that summer.

Will you ask Marty if she does not know of some good woman who would like to go to Small Point for July, August and most of September and do good plain cooking, also assist a little with the plain washing. We would like very much to get a good, reliable woman and wages are no object if we can get the right material. I of course understand how difficult it is and only mention this as it might be possible that there would be somebody who would like to go there for the Summer. We shall have to keep the cook here and the expense of moving servants from here to Small Point and back is quite considerable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 5

Sewall and his family summered at the cottage until his death in 1914. Three years later the Reeds attempted to foreclose on the mortgage but Sewall's widow Josefa sold it to Oscar's brother Frank L. Sewall of California on January of 1917. The extent to which Frank used the cottage during the next decade is unknown, and a 1929 map of Small Point suggests that many of the properties had by then changed hands. Just prior to his death he sold the property to his cousin Horace Rope's wife, Corinna de L. Ropes, of Minneapolis, thus keeping it in the family for several more years. Finally, in 1935, the property was sold to General Edward P. Curtis and his family, who own it currently. The Curtis's removed the southern leg of the wraparound porch almost immediately, and the current owners have made slight changes to the kitchen area, removed the carriage house and added a garage.

Other than these changes the structure retains the stylistic features that invoke the leisure ethic of the turn of the twentieth century in coastal Maine. Although not as large as many of its shingle style contemporaries in Bar Harbor, Islesboro or North Haven, Ropes End is an intact example of an upperclass summer cottage. Large and numerous windows let in light and air, the wide porch provided shelter from the sun, and the fireplace took the chill of the summer evenings. In this house nurses, gardeners, cooks and servants did the work while the families relaxed, socialized and cemented business networks with the neighbors. Indeed, the arrival and departure of the influential families at Small Point were often noted in the paper. Unlike many of the other summer communities, the majority of the residents, including the Sewalls, hailed from the city of Bath, less than 15 miles further north, and thus created a fairly exclusive enclave for that town's power elite. Although several other cottages are extant, the Curtis Cottage retains its turn of the century features to the fullest extent possible.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the Town of Phippsburg tax map 21, lot 10, but does not include the new structure on the property described as map 21 lot 10.00001.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces all the property that is historically associated with the Ropes End cottage, as can be seen on the current tax maps and the *Plan of Small Point Lands, Sept. 9, 1929*, at the Sagadahoc Registry of Deeds, Bath, Maine.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

ROPES END

SAGADAHOC, MAINE

Section number ____ **Page** ____

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

October 4, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

East facade looking northwest.

2 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

October 4, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

North elevation, looking south.

3 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

October 4, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

West elevation, looking east.

4 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

October 4, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Living room, looking southeast.