

1100731 DATA SHEET

DATA SHEET

Hon. William Cohen

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Hancock
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE JAN 8 1975

1. NAME

COMMON:
Somesville Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Exit of Hallowell and its environs

CITY OR TOWN:
Mount Desert

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First

STATE:
Maine

CODE:
23

COUNTY:
Hancock

CODE:
009

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Several

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Somesville

STATE:
Maine

CODE:
23

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Hancock County Registry of Deeds, Ellsworth, Maine

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Ellsworth

STATE:
Maine

CODE:
23

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

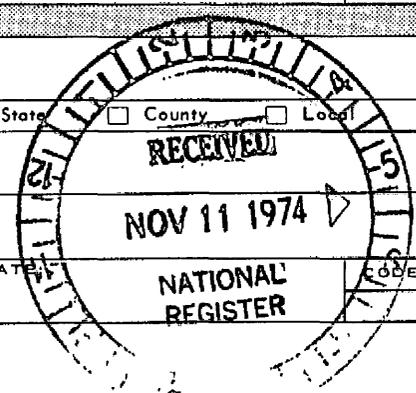
STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Maine

COUNTY: Hancock

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DATE: JAN 8 1975

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Listed below are the structures and sites within the district which are of special interest:

1. John M. Noyes House - 1836-38. John M. Noyes erected this large two and a half story gable roofed dwelling for himself between 1836 and 1838. Of traditional eighteenth century form, the house displays Greek Revival doorway and window trim as well as later pairs of Italianate brackets at the eaves and a Colonial Revival front porch. Noyes, the original builder and owner, was a carpenter and cabinet maker, who constructed both houses and furniture for the residents of Mt. Desert. A native of Stonington on Deer Isle, he moved to Somesville in the early 1830's and married Emily Somes, a granddaughter of Abraham Somes, the community's founder. When Noyes eventually left for Georgetown, Massachusetts, he sold his home to A. J. Whiting, a prominent nineteenth century businessman in the village. Whiting built ships, invested in houses to rent, and made considerable money from stone quarries.

2. Somesville Union Meeting House - 1852. The Somesville Union Meeting House of 1852 is a handsome Greek Revival Church planned by Benjamin S. Deane of Bangor, the leading mid-nineteenth century architect in Eastern Maine. The design of a temple facade with two fluted Doric columns in antis and an octagon belfrey and steeple was highly favored by Deane, who used it for several other churches in the region.

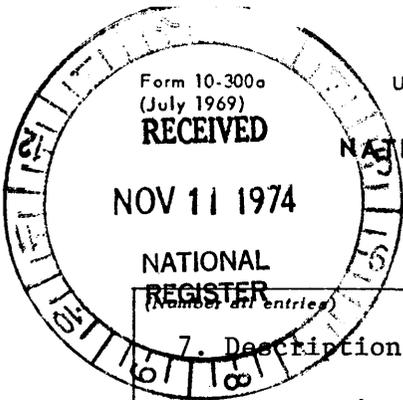
3. Isaac Somes House - Completed 1828. The Isaac Somes House is the oldest dwelling in the community. While its two and a half storied central chimnied form would suggest a mid to late eighteenth century date, the Somes House more likely represents a conservative survival of the Colonial period into the early nineteenth century. Both exterior and interior woodwork was executed in a restrained Federal style manner. During some alterations, a board was found in the walls on which was written, "This house was finished in 1828." The house is flanked on the north side by a one story ell of unknown date and on the south side by a Colonial Revival porch. Isaac Somes was the grandson of Abraham Somes, the village's first settler. The house has remained in the family throughout its history and is now in possession of Isaac's granddaughter.

4. Somes Brook - Nineteenth Century. Somes Brook extends from Somes Pond to Somes Harbor. The three sons of Abraham Somes, Abraham, John and Daniel, dammed the brook and built a series of mills there. Abraham had a carding mill which was carried on by his son, Isaac, who added a fulling mill, a dye house, and, finally, a woolen mill. Opposite Abraham and Isaac's mills was John's shingle mill. Two adjacent flumes carried water to power these mills. Near the end of the brook was Daniel's tannery. The last of the Somes brothers mills along the brook was taken down in 1924. However, numerous granite foundations survive to mark their sites.

5. Mount Desert Museum - Early Nineteenth Century. This small one and a half storied gable roofed building has been used as a town house,

(See Continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. Description.

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a shoemaker's shop, and a private school. One of the oldest frame structures in the village, the building is now preserved as the local museum. A grindstone displayed on the premises came from the Somes grist mill, which was located on the adjacent mill pond.

6. Somesville Mill Pond - Nineteenth Century. During the nineteenth century, the mill pond was surrounded by saw mills, a shingle mill, a grist mill, and a carding and fulling mill. The last building, a saw mill, was burned on July 4, 1934. Much of the remains of these mills disappeared in the mid-nineteen-thirties when the when the dam was reconstructed.

7. Somes Harbor - Nineteenth Century. The quiet shores of this sheltered harbor were once the site of active nineteenth century shipyards. No remains of the yards now survive.

8. Abraham Somes House - 1836. Abraham Somes, a grandson and namesake of the community's first settler, built this handsome story and a half house in 1836. In the Greek Revival manner, one of the gable ends of the house is the facade, and the doorway is located at one side. The gable end of the roof is strongly outlined in cornice moulding to give the effect of a Grecian triangular pediment. Stylish doorway and window trim is present. With the Greek key motif on its pilasters, the design of the doorway seems to have been based on plate 28 of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter, which was first published in Boston in 1830. Unfortunately this has been somewhat obscured by the addition of a modern metal overhang. Windows, including the two unusual half arched ones in the pediment, are enframed with the Greek Revival molding and cornerblock treatment.

9. Mount Desert Tavern or Mount Desert - Mid-Nineteenth Century. Built by Daniel Somes, this structure is a modified version of the Abraham Somes House. While lacking any sophisticated Greek Revival details and having undergone several alterations and additions, this structure is of prime historical interest as an early public house on Mount Desert Island. Here the mail stages stopped with passengers, and here the first summer visitors to Mount Desert made their headquarters.

The artist, Frederick Church, discovered the beauty of Mount Desert Island sometime in the early 1850's and came with a party of friends to the Mount Desert Tavern where they stayed for some time exploring the island and becoming acquainted with the residents. Before they left they gave a party to which the village people were invited and also many in the other villages of the island. A piano was brought from Ellsworth or Bangor, probably the first one to be brought to the Island, and ice cream made its first appearance at Mount Desert as a part of the refreshments.

The party included many people of prominence of New York City, twenty-six in all. Mr. Charles Tracy of New York, father of Mrs. J. P. Morgan, Sr., whose family accompanied him, kept a diary of the events of the excursion and the book is now in the Morgan Library in New York. He describes the beauty of the island and the party which they gave. Mr. Church, the artist,

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7. Description.

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remained after the others had gone, staying in the different villages, painting the portraits of many of the residents as well as pictures of the scenery. Through his pictures exhibited in the large cities, attention began to be directed toward the wild beauty of Mount Desert Island, which resulted in its being a post Civil War resort that rivaled Newport.

10. Nathan Salisbury House - Mid-Nineteenth Century. Built about 1850, this large two and a half story gable roofed house reflects the eighteenth century in form. Its later date is betrayed by its restrained Greek Revival doorway and window trim.

11. Lewis Somes House - 1852. Daniel Somes built this typical frame Greek Revival Cape style house for his son Lewis in 1852. Its chaste lines and double gabled facade make this dwelling a pleasing element of the village landscape.

District Delineation:

The Somesville Historic District includes an area completely surrounding Somes Harbor. From the intersection of State Routes 102 and 198 it extends 165 yards north on Route 102 and 2100 yards south along the same route. East from the junction it runs 500 yards along Route 198. The west boundary runs parallel to and 250 yards west of Route 102 and the east and south boundaries 85 yards from the shore of Somes Harbor with the exception of certain points of land projecting into the harbor where the distance is greater. The north boundary is a straight line running from the northerly limit of the District on Route 102 to the easterly limit on Route 198.

The District is without industrial or commercial intrusions not in keeping with its homogeneous nature.



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7. Description

The entire Somesville Historic District includes some 25 to 30 buildings, of which those described are typical. The harbor is included for two important reasons. First, it was this deep, perfectly protected anchorage that attracted the first settlers to this spot; and secondly, it was the site of shipbuilding, one of the town's most important 19th-century industries.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian; | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | <u>Early Regional</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Settlement</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The striking and singularly beautiful island known as Mount Desert was one of the earliest landmarks noted by explorers of the Maine coast. The first European positively known to have seen it was Estevan Gomes, a Portuguese in Spanish service, in 1525 and it was first recorded on a world map by Diego Ribero in 1529. On September 6, 1604, Samuel de Champlain, pilot and guide for the Sieur de Monts, sighted the bare rock summit of what is now Cadillac Mountain and gave it its present name, calling it L'Isle des Monts-deserts.

The first attempt at settlement, apart from the Indians who summered on the island, was Saint-Sauveur, a French mission established by Fr. Pierre Biard, S. J. in 1613. This colony was, however, destroyed by the English within a short time. Various trading posts existed from time to time and the ownership of the island passed through several hands in a century and a half of colorful but inconclusive history.

To Somesville falls the distinction of being the first permanent settlement in this now popular resort area, sight of New England's only National Park.

At the behest of Governor Bernard of Massachusetts, Abraham Somes, who had visited Mount Desert in 1759, established a home for himself, his wife and four daughters in what is now Somesville in 1761. There he built a rude log cabin a little to the east of the present Somes House. In 1763 or 1764 Governor Bernard paid him a visit of inspection and recorded in his journal, "We went on shore and into Somes' log house, found it neat and convenient, though not quite furnished, and in it a notable woman and four pretty girls, clean and orderly. Near it were many fish drying there."

Somes was shortly joined by James Richardson who built the first mill in 1763 and these two large families (Somes had thirteen children and Richardson eleven) were influential in almost all aspects of the early development of the community.

Somesville, at first known by the picturesque name of Betwix't the Hills, became part of Mount Desert Plantation which was incorporated in 1789. In 1792 the Congregational Church was organized.

Records of 1836 indicate that there were nine families living in Somesville. Evidently this small population was, nevertheless, extremely active for the town contained "one small store, one blacksmith shop, one shoemaker's shop, one tan yard, two ship yards, one bark mill, one lath mill, one shingle mill, one grist mill and one school house in which schools and meetings were held."

(See continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Morison, Samuel Eliot, The Story of Mount Desert Island. Boston, 1960

Thornton, Nellie C., Traditions and Records of Southwest Harbor and Somerville. Auburn, 1938.

Street, G. E., History of Mount Desert. Boston, 1905

NW 19/552990
 4913 350
 NE 19/554220/4912 940
 SE 19/553550/4910 870
 SW 19/552340/491 280

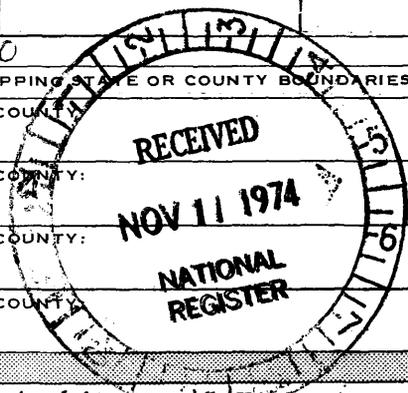
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	68° 20' 06"	44° 22' 19"				
NE	68° 19' 17"	44° 22' 06"				
SE	68° 19' 44"	44° 21' 02"				
SW	68° 20' 33"	44° 21' 15"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 400

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Architectural Historian
 Frank A. Beard, Historic Preservationist

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: 10/29/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: James A. Mundy

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: November 6, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 1/8/75

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 1-7-75

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

2.

Besides the modern dam at the outlet of Somes Pond, there are clearly evident remains of several mill sites along Somes Brook. The ship building which became the most important nineteenth century industry was carried on along the shore of landlocked Somes Harbor although few if any remains are still visible.

Somesville is also notable as an early artist's Mecca and perhaps the first place visited by the early "rusticators", the progenitors of the legions of summer folk who have made Mount Desert a legendary summer resort. Prominent nineteenth century artists like Thomas Cole and Frederick Church were drawn to the unusual scenery of the area as early as the 1840's.

Although the architecture of the area ranges from Colonial to late nineteenth century Victorian, it retains a cohesive homogeneity in an idyllic setting. Painted a uniform white, these buildings reflect a quiet simplicity expressive of the slow paced growth of this serene unspoiled community nestled at the headwaters of majestic, fjord-like Somes Sound.



somes harbor historic district

