

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Charles Best House

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number County Rd., West Pembroke N/A not for publication

city, town West Pembroke N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Maine code 23 county Washington code 029

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Kenneth R. Burke

street & number 665 Alvarado Street

city, town San Francisco vicinity of state California 94114

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Registry of Deeds, Machias, Maine

street & number

city, town Machias state Maine

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Sunrise County Architecture has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Sunrise Research Institute

city, town Machias state Maine

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

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### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Dating from c. 1845, the Dr. Charles H. Best Birthplace of West Pembroke is a vernacular dwelling in the Greek Revival style and is a good example of New England "connected architecture". All components of the property are of frame construction with clapboard sheathing, painted white.

The main house is 2 1/2 stories tall, with a three-bay facade facing south-west in the gable-end. The entablatured entrance with sidelights is sited to the left side of the facade.

Extending south-east from the house is a 1 1/2 story ell with large gabled dormer facing southwest above a secondary entrance. This entrance is covered by a simple one-story porch just one bay wide.

Running from the north-west side of the house is a series of three connected sections, consisting of a one-story kitchen wing with shed roof and bracketed cornice; a one story carriage house with two barn doors facing south-west; and a 1 1/2-story barn with sliding door facing south-east.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1845

Builder/Architect

*unknown*

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This house derives primary significance as the birthplace on February 27, 1899, of Dr. Charles H. Best, co-discoverer with Sir Frederick Banting of insulin which has since resulted in providing long and happy lives for millions of victims of diabetes, a once fatal disease. Best lived in this house until he was graduated from high school and went on to the University of Toronto. It is the only residence in the United States occupied by him for any length of time.

In 1921, after graduation from the University of Toronto and service in the First World War, Best began a "partnership" in Canada with Banting. The first successful insulin shot given to a human was administered by Best on January 11, 1922. Their work was carried out in the laboratory of John J.R. McLeod and, although the latter did not participate in insulin isolation, the 1923 Nobel Prize in medicine was awarded to Banting and McLeod. Banting was incensed, but accepted the prize and gave half the money to Best.

In addition to his work in the discovery of insulin, Best also introduced the first anticoagulant for the prevention of thrombosis, discovered a new enzyme which destroys histamine, and a new vitamin (choline) which prevents liver damage. He became director of the Banting and Best Department of Medical Research established by the Ontario Legislature at the University of Toronto and also head of the Department of Physiology. He was the recipient of many international awards. He died on March 31, 1978.

In 1959 the Best birthplace was purchased by the American Diabetes Association through a specially created trust. In 1978 title was transferred to the National Trust for Historic Preservation who in turn deeded it to the present owner with an easement and covenants to insure its preservation.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dekruif, Paul, Men Against Death, New York, 1928  
 Gates, Edwin, W., M.D. "Birthplace of Charles H. Best", Forecast, published by the American Diabetes Association, Nov.-Dec., 1966.

# 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2

Quadrangle name Pembroke

UTM NOT VERIFIED  
 Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	9	6	4	3	9	7	0	4	9	7	8	5	1	2	1	5
Zone			Easting					Northing								

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Washington County Registry of Deeds, Book 1020, Page 110

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian / Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 1980

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone 207/289-2133

city or town Augusta state Maine

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Earle S. Feltzworth*

title S.H.P.O. date 10/30/80

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>William H. Brayham</i></u>	date <u>3.2.82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	