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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 07 1994

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 Hardscrabble Farm

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

2. Location

street & number East side of Route 131,  
.5 Miles south of Junction with Route 173  N/A not for publication

city or town Searsmont  vicinity

state Maine code ME county Waldo code 027 zip code 04973

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.)

E. S. [Signature] 1/26/94  
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:)

for Signature of the Keeper Entered in the Date of Action  
Gus M. Lapsley National Register 3/7/94

HARDSCRABBLE FARM  
Name of Property

WALDO, 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	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
2	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)

Greek Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Wood/Weatherboard

Wood/Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Side Porch and Connected

Building Complex

**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

Literature

**Period of Significance**

c. 1900

1931-1944

**Significant Dates**

c. 1900

1931

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Williams, Ben Ames

**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:

\_\_\_\_\_

HARDSCRABBLE FARM  
Name of Property

WALDO, MAINE  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 70

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	9
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4	8	4	0	4	0
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4	9	1	1	1	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

1	9
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 | 

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

2 

1	9
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 | 

4	8	4	7	6	0
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 | 

4	9	1	0	4	6	0
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4 

1	9
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 | 

4	8	3	9	0	0
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 | 

4	9	1	0	7	8	0
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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. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1994

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.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**HARDSCRABBLE FARMWALDO, MAINESection number 7 Page 2

Hardscrabble Farm is a one-and-a-half-story, five-bay, frame Greek Revival cape whose telescoping ell extends to a large barn. This connected building complex stands on a seventy acre property which had been actively farmed until the early twentieth century. The house, which is sheathed in weatherboards, rests on a granite foundation. Wood shingles predominate on the ell and barn.

Facing west, the dwelling's symmetrically composed front elevation features a modestly detailed but nonetheless characteristic Greek Revival central doorway composed of a recessed four-panel door flanked by narrow sidelights and framed by wide pilasters and entablature. Two six-over-six windows are located on either side of this entry. A simple boxed cornice with short gable end returns carries across the facade. Rising through the roof ridge directly on-axis with the doorway is the brick flue stack.

The north gable end of the main block contains pairs of symmetrically placed six-over-six windows on the first story and similar but smaller units above. There are two small windows on the northeast rear wall of the front block, three windows on the kitchen ell and a window and door on the woodshed ell. The walls of these two ells are covered in wood shingles, and both feature flues, the one in the woodshed being of recent origin to serve a wood furnace. In contrast to the north side, the south elevation features an engaged porch along the kitchen ell which projects into the main block to shelter one of the first story six-over-six windows. The fenestration pattern on the main house matches that of the north side. Behind the kitchen porch is a centrally located door flanked by six-over-six windows, the easternmost of which was added after 1900. The woodshed contains a trio of windows and a shed addition with two small windows near the kitchen ell. Judging from the appearance of the joint between the main block and kitchen ell, this latter section is either later than the other, or alterations have been made to the roof/cornice. This difference may also indicate that the porch is a later addition, although further investigation would be needed to verify this possibility.

The interior of the house is typical of dwellings of this period and size, although significant changes were made between 1931 and 1953. Its very modest trim includes Greek Revival mantelpieces in the two principal first floor rooms. Of note is the stair to the upper story. It is located in the front vestibule where it rises in one ascent under and between the fireplace flues which meet to form the single stack visible on the exterior. This is an unusual design solution and the reason for its configuration is uncertain at this time. A major alteration to the building's floor plan was made when a partition wall between the southwest front room and the one behind was removed to create one large space. A small kitchen is located behind this room. A narrow passage extends along the south wall of the woodshed and into

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the barn.

The barn has a double track mounted door on its front elevation along with weatherboard siding up to the gable and wood shingles above. The rectangular window below the gable peak as well as similar units on each of the other sides are of more recent origin, but appear to have been added during the residence of Ben Ames Williams (between 1931 and 1953). There are four small square windows and a shed addition on the south side, a second set of doors on the rear and a trio of windows on the north side. The barn's interior has a large open central drive with the side bays divided into two levels. At the northeast corner of the lower level is the large study used by Williams.

The low stone wall which extends southward in an arc from the front of the house along Route 131 and the driveway to the barn was built during the occupation by Williams. The original drive was located adjacent to the house where it met the barn doors, thereby creating a traditional working dooryard.

Two existing historic photographs of this property reveal that a number of changes have been made to the arrangement of the several components of this complex. A photograph of unknown date showing the house and ell but not the barn, reveals that in place of the present woodshed ell a low shed-roofed passage with a single south facing window linked the kitchen ell to an outbuilding whose gable roof ran parallel to that of the main house. Since this outbuilding was set back from but slightly south of the kitchen ell, the connector met both the house and outbuilding at oblique angles. Unfortunately, the barn is not shown in this view, but must lay just off to the right. Given the position of the outbuilding to the known original location of the barn (as seen in the second photograph), it is entirely likely that the two were connected thereby forming a courtyard. The second photograph is a c. 1900 stereoptican view of Searsmont taken from the hilltop about a half mile to the southwest of Hardscrabble Farm. It too shows the shed-roofed connector as well as the location of the barn. Unfortunately, the gable roofed outbuilding and its relative position to the barn is totally obscured by the barn. Sometime after these two photographs were made, therefore, Bert McCorrison undertook a major reshaping of his farm buildings. The connector was removed entirely and the gabled outbuilding, which appears to be of equivalent scale to the existing woodshed ell, was apparently moved to the rear of the kitchen ell with its gable perpendicular to the main block of the house. The specific manner in which this outbuilding was rotated to make this change is uncertain, although the large doorway visible in the photograph may correspond to one now at the northeast section of the woodshed. In addition, there was a window east of this door which was blocked in by the present owner, an opening which corresponds to one flanking the door as viewed in the historic view. If this is the case, the

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HARDSCRABBLE FARM

WALDO, MAINE

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outbuilding's south end - farthest from the kitchen ell - would have been swung around and joined to the house. Presumably at the same time that the woodshed was relocated the barn was also moved to its present site, thereby completing the new configuration.

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Continuation Sheet**HARDSCRABBLE FARMWALDO, MAINESection number 8 Page 2

Hardscrabble Farm consists of a c. 1845 Greek Revival style cape situated at the head of a connected group of outbuildings and located on a seventy acre parcel of property in rural Searsmont. First occupied by members of the Lincoln family, the house and barn appear to have achieved their present configuration about 1900 during the ownership of Albert "Bert" McCorrison (1855-1931). In addition to its architectural significance as a well preserved example of a connected farm complex, the property is important for its association with the author Ben Ames Williams who made it his summer residence from 1931 until his death in 1953. Hardscrabble Farm is eligible for nomination to the Register under criteria B and C.

The first occupant of the property which constitutes Hardscrabble Farm appears to have been Dwelly Lincoln who acquired in 1809 a one-hundred acre parcel of land of which this is part for \$600. He remained here until 1841 when he sold the farm (now reduced to seventy acres) for \$2,000 to David Lincoln (relationship undetermined). Both the increased value and Dwelly Lincoln's duration of ownership suggest that a house was on the property by 1841. However, it is not certain whether the present Greek Revival style dwelling is a replacement of the earlier structure or is the result of a substantial remodeling of the original house. In any event, based on the stylistic features of the main block of the house, it seems reasonable to conclude that its present appearance largely dates from after 1841.

David Lincoln retained ownership of the farm until 1852 when he sold it to Jane Weed. Although its recorded owners varied during the next twenty years, it seems to have been largely occupied by the Weed family. In 1872 the property came into the possession of Rachel Weed who would become the second wife of Bert McCorrison's father. The period of ownership by Jane Weed may represent the time frame when the property received its name Hardscrabble Farm. Williams' family tradition holds that the name was taken from the farm of the same title owned by Ulysses S. Grant; its use here reflecting Grant's popularity in the post Civil War period. The name had certainly been attached to the farm prior to Bert McCorrison's acquisition of the property from his stepmother in 1893 for \$1,500.

A stereoptican view of Searsmont made about 1900 which shows the property as it appeared after Bert McCorrison purchased it, and a second undated photo clearly reveal that the original configuration of the outbuildings was significantly different than that visible today. The barn was located south of the house but may have been linked to it by way of an intervening outbuilding (quite likely the present woodshed) and a shed-roofed connector. This U-shaped courtyard gave way to the more linear arrangement of buildings when Bert McCorrison shuffled the components sometime about 1900. In addition to the buildings the stereo view shows a rock boundary wall stretching southward along the road from near the barn; other walls in



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the fields behind; and a well established orchard located around three sides of the buildings. Bert McCorrison's reorganization of his connected farm complex at the turn-of-the-century indicates the persistence of methods for improving one's farm. As Tom Hubka has argued in his pioneering study of New England connected architecture Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn, the impulse to create such complexes beginning in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was largely driven by efforts to increase efficiency and thereby remain competitive. McCorrison must have considered his arrangement to have been highly inefficient for him to have changed it to the extent that he did. In part, he may have been trying to create more favorable dooryard conditions by gaining improved southern and eastern exposure. The original configuration was far less adequate in this respect since the barn would have blocked sunlight, particularly in the area immediately in front of its entry and at the corner near the woodshed

In his will, Bert McCorrison left his farm to Ben Ames Williams (1889-1953), an author whom he had met in 1918 and with whom a deep friendship had developed. McCorrison appeared as 'Bert McAusland' in several of Williams' short stories about the fictional town of Fraternity (in reality Searsmont), Maine. Ben Ames Williams was born in Macon, Mississippi, and grew up in Ohio and Massachusetts. Upon graduating from Dartmouth College in 1910, he took a position as a reporter on the Boston American and wrote short fiction stories in his spare time. His success in this latter field convinced him to resign from the newspaper in December of 1916 and pursue a career writing short stories. Over the next several decades, some 500 works were published in various magazines including the Saturday Evening Post and Colliers and collected in two volumes titled Thrifty Stock (1939) and Fraternity Village (1949). In addition to his short stories, Williams wrote over thirty novels among which are Come Spring (1940), House Divided (1947), The Strange Woman (1941) and Leave Her to Heaven (1944), the latter two of which were made into motion pictures. Although no recent criticism of his work has been published, Williams clearly holds a place in the history of American literature if for no other reason than the sheer number and popularity of his short stories and novels.

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HARDSCRABBLE FARM

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Edwards, Herbert. "Ben Ames Williams at Hardscrabble Farm." Down East Magazine. April, 1969.

Warfel, Harry R. American Novelists of Today. New York: American Book Company. 1951.

Williams, Ben Ames. "A History of Hardscrabble Farm." Unpublished typescript copy. No date.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HARDSCRABBLE FARM

WALDO, MAINE

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## Verbal Boundary Description

See map.

## Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of Hardscrabble Farm embraces the seventy (70) plus/minus acres which have been associated with the existing buildings since 1841. This is the identical property which Bert McCorrison obtained in 1893 and the one he left to Ben Ames Williams upon his death in 1931.

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HARDSCRABBLE FARM  
SEARSMONT, VIC., MAINE



SCALE: 1" = 500'

