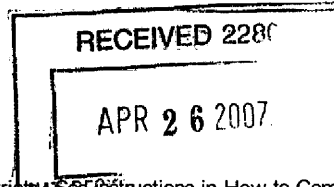


527

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  in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any 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 Hale House

other names/site number New Sybaris, The Red House

2. Location

street & number 2625A Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway  not for publication

city or town South Kingstown  vicinity

state Rhode Island code RI county Washington code 009 zip code 02879

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 Sanderson 4/24/2007  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage 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 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  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- other (explain)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 6-5-07

Hale House  
Name of Property

Washington County, RI  
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.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
2	2	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**  
(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

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, Second Empire

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation STONE: Granite  
walls WOOD: Shingle, clapboard  
roof ASPHALT  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**DESCRIPTION**

The Hale House (1873) is a moderate-size, gambrel-roofed wood-frame house, set close to Perry Highway (Route 1) in the coastal town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island. The house was designed and built as a summer house in the foothills of the Matunuck moraine. It faces south and has some views of the ocean across the Matunuck coastal plain of open farmland. The property borders an inland, spring-fed pond.

The house is 2½ stories tall, three bays wide by two bays, with a bell-cast gambrel roof. It has a wide cornice, deep eaves, and paired brackets at the returns. A matching ell is set at the north (rear) side of the house, giving the house a T-shaped footprint.

The exterior walls are covered with unpainted shingles applied over earlier clapboards. There are open porches on the façade and the side elevations; they have chamfered posts and diagonal braces. The windows have plain surrounds, 2/2 sash, and plank shutters. There are gable-roof dormers in the lower slope of the front elevation roof and in the upper slope of the back roof. A large sunbonnet gable is set over the central entry. There are two small, interior, brick chimneys.

The entryways are located in the center of the façade, at each end of the house, on the rear wall of the ell, and on the back wall of the main block. The front entrance has a double door; the entry under the east porch has a Dutch door; the entry under the west porch has French doors. The entryways are surrounded by plain wood frames and have small transoms.

The plan of the Hale House is symmetrical—paired rooms are located off a long, wide, central stairhall. The stair, slightly curved at its base, has a heavy newel and turned balusters. On the east side of the house are a parlor and a library; they are separated by pocket doors. On the west side of the stairhall are another parlor and the dining room, separated by a large chimney with fireplaces opening into each room.

The plan is repeated on the second floor, where four chambers open off a center hall. On the third floor, small bedrooms open off a square hallway. Kitchen and pantry occupy the first floor of the ell; small rooms for staff occupy the second and third floors which can be accessed through a small back stair.

Throughout the house the finishes are plain--plaster walls, flat-board window and door surrounds, simple mantels, high baseboards, wooden floors (some are painted). The ceilings are high—12' on the first floor. Some fittings remain from the earliest years of the house, such as the open shelves of the pantry. The kitchen is outfitted as for a simple, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century summer house. The plumbing fixtures date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries—they are porcelain and marble with chrome taps and fixtures.

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Hale House

South Kingstown

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Hale House is set on a lot of about 1.6 acres between Perry Highway and Wash Pond. The land rises from the highway (now heavily traveled) to the house; at the rear of the house the land falls away to the shore of the pond. A driveway once circulated around the house; there are some remnants of the drive. The land is now overgrown with privet, rhododendron, deciduous trees, and scrub brush, though a visitor may still catch glimpses of the pond and the ocean views which originally attracted summer visitors to this area. An entry court off the east porch is hedged with privet.

There is a small, single-story boathouse on the shore of the pond. Like the Hale House, it is wood-frame with a gambrel roof. It is covered with narrow vertical board siding with a sawtooth detail. There is a small wood pump house between Wash Pond and Hale House and a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century garage on the southwest corner of the property near the highway.

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**List of Photographs**

The information for numbers 1–5 below is the same for each photograph:

1. Hale House
2. Washington County, Rhode Island
3. Joan Youngken, photographer
4. April 2006
5. Original negative at: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

The following information is specific to the indicated photograph:

6. Hale House, south elevation (façade), view looking north.
7. Photograph #1
6. Hale House, east elevation, view looking southwest.
7. Photograph #2
6. Hale House, north and east elevations, view looking southeast.
7. Photograph #3
6. Hale House, west elevation, view looking north.
7. Photograph #4
6. Hale House, interior view, stair in first floor hall, view looking northwest.
7. Photograph #5
6. Hale House, interior view of double parlor, view looking northeast.
7. Photograph #6
6. Hale House, interior view of dining room, view looking southwest
7. Photograph #7
6. Boathouse and Hale House shown from Wash Pond, view looking southeast
7. Photograph #8

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- 6. Boathouse shown from Wash Pond, view looking southeast
- 7. Photograph #9

Hale House  
Name of Property

Washington County, RI  
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**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

**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 36) 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 #

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Architecture
- Literature
- Recreation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1873-1910

**Significant Dates**

1873  
1877

**Significant Person**

Hale, Edward Everett (1822-1909)

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Maxson, Charles, builder

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository  
Pettaquamscutt Historical Society

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Hale House is significant as a good example of a rural summer home in coastal Rhode Island and for its association with the life and work of Edward Everett Hale, Unitarian leader, author, and lecturer.

Designed as a summer house near the seashore and built in 1873, the Hale House embodies the character of seasonal residence by urban Americans seeking refuge from the unhealthy summer climate of city life in the northeastern United States in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The Hale House retains, with considerable exterior and interior integrity, the look and feel of an early and developing summer house style, with large, airy rooms (the parlor documented as having been furnished with wicker), high ceilings, and wide porches, sited on a rural promontory with wide ocean views. Wide hallways and French and Dutch doors allow for casual flow from indoors to the porches and outdoors, accommodating the summer lifestyle of the busy family.

A careful reading of Hale letters and other documents has failed to identify the builder or architect of the house, but a reference to "Maxson" in the context of the construction of the house suggests that the builder was the firm of C. Maxson and Company of Westerly. The firm was directly involved in the development of Watch Hill, Rhode Island, as a resort community in the 1860s, and is credited with the construction of the Ocean House, the village's iconic hotel, as well as the Atlantic, Plimpton, and Bay View Houses, all in Watch Hill. In Narragansett, the Maxson firm built the Mount Hope House, Tower Hill House, and the Massasoit House. They built the Mathewson House in 1867, and made improvements to it in 1895. Of these, the Massasoit, Mathewson, and Mount Hope Houses each feature rooflines similar in profile to the distinctive bell-cast gambrel that distinguishes the Hale House. A number of year-round and summer residences in Westerly, including two in Watch Hill built for the Maxson family members, are attributed to the firm.

The Hale House was built for Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909) and his family by William B. Weeden, historian, antiquarian, mill-owner, and summer resident of Matunuck. Weeden, a third-generation land-holder in the community, had become acquainted with Hale through a variety of common interests: industrial and social reform, work within and on behalf of the Unitarian Church and Antioch College, and shared pursuits in American history and culture. Hale visited Weeden and his family nearby at the Weeden Farm ("Willow Dell") several times between 1867 and 1873, when Weeden commissioned Maxson to build the commodious house for Hale's use. At this time, Weeden was also enlarging and embellishing Willow Dell, a modest 18<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse, as his own summer house. A large gambrel-roofed wing with a wide porch was constructed by the Maxson firm.

In 1873, the Matunuck area of South Kingstown was sparsely populated with year-round residents, primarily farmers between a rocky moraine and its glacial ponds, north of the road now known as Commodore Perry



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Highway, and the ocean to the south. Most homes were modest in scale and vernacular in style. The Hale House, appearing to be fully three stories tall, with large, airy rooms, high ceilings, many large windows and doors, and deep porches, emerged as an anomaly in the area, purpose-built for the summer season, designed to capture every breeze, a reflection of the developing taste for “summer architecture.” The house is not well suited to winter use, although Susan Hale describes occasional late-season occupancy, with the family huddled around the fireplaces and stoves, kept in fuel by “old Franklin,” a local African-American man who served as handy-man for the Hales.

During this period, Rhode Island’s reputation as a summer resort was solidified. Nearby Newport and Narragansett were rapidly developing as summer colonies, with an increasing number of hotels and boarding houses accommodating seasonal visitors. In each community, private summer cottages were architect-designed for prominent families who enjoyed a busy social season. In Newport in the 1870s, the Boston and Cambridge intelligentsia, led by Julia Ward Howe, congregated as the Town and Country Club, a milieu soon overshadowed by those seeking a livelier social scene. In Narragansett, social activity revolved around hotel life and private parties. Matunuck, in sharp contrast, was rural, quiet, and bucolic, conducive to the Hale’s respite from social obligations and those he faced as a prominent public figure and minister. During the occupancy of the house by the Hale family, other summer houses were built nearby in the Matunuck Hills and along the shore by family, friends, and acquaintances, resulting in a small summer colony that preferred and enjoyed Matunuck’s more rustic, informal season as pioneered by the Hales.

Edward Everett Hale, perhaps best known today as the author of *Man Without A Country*, was minister of the Congregationalist Church of the Unity in Worcester, Massachusetts, from 1846 to 1856, and of the South Congregational Church in Boston where he was minister until 1899. Matriculating at Harvard at age 13, and graduating four years later, he was a prolific author and lecturer throughout his life, his interests ranging from travel to biography, from ancient history to nineteenth-century industrial reform and social conscience. His vocal advocacy of the abolition of slavery, education reform, and social reform earned him a highly visible and well-respected position at local, regional, and national levels. He was highly sought after as a speaker and preacher, and served as Chaplain to the United States Senate during the last years of his life.

Hale and his wife, Emily Baldwin Perkins of Hartford (niece of Catharine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Henry Ward Beecher), had nine children, three of whom died in childhood. In 1873, the first year of the Hales’ residency, the surviving children ranged in age from four to nineteen. Five young boys and their older sister took full advantage of all of the summer activities available to them, hiking, boating, picnicking, and swimming in both Wash Pond, directly behind the house, and the ocean two miles away. Inevitably, the summers spent in Matunuck during their formative years had an impact on each of these young people, instilling an appreciation of independence, the outdoors, creative and artistic expression, and the opportunity for true recreation. Of this

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generation, Ellen Day Hale and Philip Leslie Hale became painters of considerable reputation. Edward E. Hale, Jr., a writer and biographer, taught at Union College. Herbert Dudley Hale became an architect of distinction. Arthur Hale worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and the American Railway Association, and Robert Beverly Hale was a promising poet and author, published in many of the literary and popular journals of the day. Following his death in 1895, a small library was built across Wash Pond Road, on what is now the Commodore Perry Highway, and dedicated to his memory. It was later transferred to the Town of South Kingstown, and is a branch of the South Kingstown Public Library, serving the community of Matunuck and its summer population.

The family quickly dubbed the house New Sybaris, in reference to Hale's essay of the same name. In it, he described the ancient city-state of Sybaris, which he perceived as a model of reasonable and civilized community, governed by laws and customs that fostered civility, productivity, and a life of ease without over-indulgence. Locally, the house was known as The Red House, in reference to its barn-red exterior, suggesting it may have been an anomaly in the area.

Hale and his literary family occupied the house seasonally for nearly 35 years, enjoying casual seclusion and summer recreation, even as they continued to pursue their literary and artistic careers. Removed and protected from the social distractions of their Roxbury home, they alternated summer seaside activities with energetic bursts of writing, producing articles, books, and lectures during their summers in residence, as well as a remarkable number of letters to absent family and friends. Edward Everett Hale was particularly productive here; his letters and Susan's bear testament to the volume of text written in Matunuck.

The level of documentation regarding the furnishings, occupancy, and activities of the house is remarkable and significant. The Hale family and their circle of friends were widespread, keenly interested in the details of each others' lives, and astute observers of detail. The minutia of everyday activities were generously shared in frequent, sometimes daily, letters, describing such detail as which wildflowers were gathered and where in the house they were placed; the comings and goings of the local residents, some identified by name as Native Americans or African-American, who were employed as servants in residence or day workers; daily activities of adults and children; how many pages of commissioned writing had been completed in a day; and which porch was the setting for meals. Together, these documents provide a specific and detailed glimpse into a seasonal household in the early days of the summer colony in Matunuck. Such accounts are not uncommon in the busier watering-holes of the mid-nineteenth century resorts; they are rare and remarkable for the nascent days of such a rural and bucolic summer colony.

It is the letters of Edward Everett Hale's sister, Susan Hale, in particular which offer the best lens through which to view the house and its occupancy. Susan was an artist and writer in her own right, having taught

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watercolor painting in Boston, written a number of books, and become in frequent demand as a lecturer on the topic of 18<sup>th</sup>-century English novels. From 1884 until her death in 1910, Susan was “the mistress of Matunuck,” serving as housekeeper and hostess for her brother and his children. She managed most of the activities of the household, directing the resident and day staff, and serving as hostess in the absence of her sister-in-law. In addition, she wrote the *Family Flight* series of travel books (co-authored with Edward), children’s poetry, literary criticism, and history, both as sole author and in collaboration with Edward and other family members. Her friends included Margaret Marquand, who later married Susan’s nephew Herbert; the Frederick Churches; Charles Dudley Warner; Oliver Wendall Holmes; and Caroline Atkinson, among many others. It is through Susan’s letters to these and others that we witness the morning swims in Wash Pond, the peripatetic meals (following the sun or shade from porch to porch), marathon writing sessions on deadline, and the comings and goings of family, friends, neighbors, and staff.

The Hale family were the sole residents of the house from 1873 until 1910, but the deed remained in the Weeden family and Weeden Corporation. The patterns of residency and identification of occupants following Susan’s death in 1910 are not yet well documented, but there is considerable oral history and secondary documentation regarding summer rentals and use by Theatre-by-the-Sea as lodging for summer stock cast and crew. The property was acquired by the John Steere family in the 1950s, and remained in the Steere family until acquired by the Pettaquamscutt Historical Society in 2006.

The period of significance for the Hale House is 1873 to 1910, when the Hale family occupied it. Its architectural integrity from that period is largely intact, with few modifications.

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Hale House  
Name of Property

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.66 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
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 Richard and Joan Youngken

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date August 27, 2006

street & number 38 Sea View Avenue telephone 401-789-5805

city or town Wakefield state Rhode Island zip code 02879

## 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 Pettaquamscutt Historical Society

street & number 2636 Kingstown Road telephone (401)783-1328

city or town Kingston state Rhode Island zip code 02881

**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 amend 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

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**GEOGRAPHIC DATA**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property is bordered on the south by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway, otherwise known as Rte 1 (a four-lane highway); on the east by Wash Pond Road (private); on the north by Wash Pond and private residential property; and on the west by a stone wall and private residential property. It is identified as Town of South Kingstown Assessor's Plat 80-1, Lot 21.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes all the land and buildings associated with the Hale House on the Hale House lot.

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