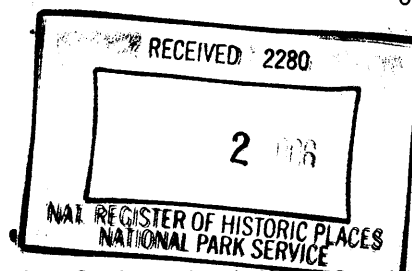


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 "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 George Ulmer House
other names/site number The Ulmer, Maj. Gen. George Ulmer House

2. Location

street & number 3 South Cobbtown Road N/A not for publication
city or town Lincolnvile N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Waldo code 027 zip code 04849

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] 8/14/86
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] 10-4-06
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Ball

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
_____ 2 _____ structures
_____ objects
_____ 1 2 _____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A _____

None _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling _____

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling _____

DOMESTIC / Multiple dwelling _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC / Federal _____

foundation STONE

walls WEATHERBOARD

ASPHALT

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK (Chimneys)

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet

ULMER, GEORGE, HOUSE

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DESCRIPTION

The George Ulmer House is an imposing and elegant Federal-era structure on the eastside of the Ducktrap River in Lincolnville, Maine. The house was built on a small rise from which Ulmer had a commanding view of the forests, mills, bridge, harbor, and shipyard that comprised the immediate facilities of his late 18th century empire on the coastal Maine frontier. At his peak Ulmer possessed upwards of 2400 acres of timber land surrounding the Ducktrap River, as well as additional land in Brewer, Eddington and among the islands of Penobscot Bay.¹ Across the river on a similar rise of land, Ulmer's older brother and original partner in land and industrial enterprises, Peter Ulmer, had what has been described as a twin house, which burned in the 1930s.² Today, the Ulmer House sits several hundred yards north of US Route 1, and crowns a small cluster of houses and cottages that date from the early 19th century through the later years of that century.

The house that to this day is known as the Ulmer House is a two-story, double-pile, timber frame structure under a hip roof with double chimneys, set on a fieldstone foundation. The principal facade faces south, towards both the early Belfast Road (Route 1) and the Ducktrap, a compact, protected circular harbor sheltered by a natural jetty at the mouth of the Ducktrap River. On the west elevation is a second formal entryway, marked by a central projecting vestibule. Almost square in plan, the building's excellent proportions are only slightly diminished by the addition of a hip roofed, three bay front porch, added in the early 20th century, and a two-section ell set off the northwest corner of the house. (The northernmost ell is a separate outbuilding with an unusual salt-box roof that may have been repositioned from an earlier location on the property.)

Behind the columned porch, the main entry to the Ulmer House is positioned at the center of the five-bay facade. This is a five panel door surrounded on both sides with three-quarter length lights, decorated with a curved lattice work of wooden mullions, over a paneled base. Directly above the door is a four-light transom, which along with two solid corner panels and plain trim boards that hint at pilasters, completes the enframing. Each of the windows contain early 20th century six-over-six double hung sash set in the original, but remarkably un-moulded exterior trim. Narrow corner boards mark the edges of each facade, and lead to a narrow fascia decorated with inverted cove brackets, guttae and crown moulding under the boxed cornice. A wooden water table separates the mortared fieldstone foundation from the clapboard cladding.

The secondary elevation faces west and is defined by four window bays and the entrance vestibule on the first floor, and three window bays above. (There are not corresponding upper level

¹Although the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Census ascribes only 1900 acres to Ulmer, a deed to him from Henry Knox dated September 19th, 1798 recorded the sale of 2442 ½ acres. As Taylor (1985) points out, Ulmer was the County Assessor for the census and may have purposely undervalued his estate.

²Grima, 1999.

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windows above the vestibule and northernmost bay.) The vestibule projects about seven feet from the plane of the building and sits on a brick foundation under a pedimented gable roof. Here the six-panel door is flanked by a pair of narrow pilasters which support a broad entablature capped with a projecting, moulded lintel. Nine-over-six original wooden sash located in the north and south walls of the vestibule provide light into the entryway. Presently, a set of old wooden steps provide access to the western entry. However, remnant granite steps set into the steeply sloping grade towards Cobtown Road suggest an early staircase and possibly terracing that extended around the front of the house.

The east elevation contains three sets of windows, two on each floor positioned towards the front of the house, and one set centered in the rear rooms. On the first floor the rear bay has been filled with a mid twentieth-century bay window. Photographs from the early twentieth-century indicate that a narrow, north-stretching wing, with a shed roof, was attached to the house at the location of this window.³ The northern elevation of the Ulmer House lacks the symmetry and order exhibited on the other three sides of the house. Five six-over-six windows (one much smaller than the others) are located on the second level, while below are two more six-over-six windows and a modern metal door. A two-bay long ell, with two-over-two windows on the west elevation, is attached to the northwest corner of the house. This ell is clad in clapboards and has a brick chimney which protrudes through the gable roof at the north end of the ridge. Abutted against the north side of this ell is a low-posted, sway-backed, salt-box shaped shed covered with asphalt shingles. This balloon-framed shed has a centered entrance on the west side and is flanked by a pair of six-over six-windows.

The interior of the Ulmer House is divided into four principal rooms on the first floor separated by a wide central hall. This hall is the most ornately finished room in the house. Wide pine wainscot, moulded chair rail, and baseboard line the plaster walls. At the walls and ceiling junction is a complex crown moulding containing modillions and dentils. The straight-run staircase features a taurus-moulded handrail over slightly tapered balusters, all of which flair open at the base of the stairs.⁴ The stringboard is decorated with an artistically rendered scroll pattern, that in relief gives the impression of breaking waves. At the top of the staircase is a small landing from which the staircase bifurcates with two steps leading to the upper stair hall to the west and two steps leading to a passage between the front and back rooms in the east. A recessed niche with a keystone arched top is set into the north wall of this landing, presumably intended to shelter a large clock. All of the mouldings and trim continue unabated through the upstairs hallway.

Each of the first floor rooms feature high ceilings (slightly over nine-feet six inches), plaster walls and ovolo-moulded and fielded six-panel doors. The trim around the windows and doors vary slightly

³O'Brien, p. 34.

⁴This handrail matches that depicted by Asher Benjamin on Plate 21 in the 1797 edition of the Country Builder's Assistant.

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from room to room, but generally contain a delicate ogee and bead pattern with beaded jams. With the exception of the kitchen in the northwest corner, the floors are of fairly wide pine. The most highly decorated of these rooms is the living room in the southeast corner of the house. This room contains the full complement of cased corner posts, chair rail, baseboard, wainscot and a simple (as compared to the front hallway) ogee shaped crown moulding. Interestingly, however, the fireplace ornamentation in this room is rather subdued, and features a rather flat, geometrically inspired surround with eared corners that is characteristic of Georgian rather than Federal architecture. (This surround is also used in the southeast chamber.) In contrast, the surround for the large cooking fireplace in the kitchen and the smaller unit in the dining room both feature more common combinations of a wide, plain entablature supported on pilasters and topped with a mantle of built up Federal-era moldings. The dining room unit is outfitted with a cast-iron Franklin fire-frame which was probably installed when the house was built.

In 1822 the Ulmer House was formally divided between two separate owners, and remained that way until the end of the twentieth century. Among the changes to the structure that resulted from this split was the installation of a second kitchen in the northeast room on the first floor. While the original kitchen in the northwest corner has the aforementioned Federal fireplace surround, a bake oven set into the face of the brick, and an oddly arched top to the roof of the cooking firebox, in the second kitchen the fireplace and bake oven were adapted from an earlier and smaller firebox. In addition, it appears that as originally built the center hallway on the first floor may have continued straight through to the rear wall of the house, and that its length was truncated when the house was divided.

On the second floor, the Ulmer House has two principal front bedrooms, and four smaller rooms in the northern portion of the house. As mentioned previously, the stylistic detailing in the southeast chamber is very similar to that of the front room below. The southwest room, however, contains a bold, Greek Revival-style fireplace surround with engaged fluted columns under a heavy, faceted entablature. The window and door trim in this room is also Greek Revival in detail, and doors to the closet and back rooms differ from those in the rest of the formal rooms both in their composition (eight-panels vs. six) and moldings (through-beaded flat panels vs. ovolo moulded fielded panels), all of which suggests that this room was either finished or updated after Ulmer no longer owned the house. The spatial arrangement of the rear rank of rooms on the second floor have been altered over time. Scars in the floors and walls suggest that the northwest room at one point was divided with a east-west partition wall into two narrow rooms, one with a fireplace, and the second possibly enclosing a now removed back staircase. In the northwest quadrant of the house a still-present rear staircase leads from the original kitchen to an upstairs hallway that connected to the southwest bedroom off of which opened at least one, and possibly two, small chambers. The extremely steep enclosed attic staircase was also reached by this hallway, and on the wall next to the door that accesses this staircase are two narrow closets. All three of these doors contain four fielded panels, and are hung with "H" hinges that retain their leather buttons. Another small chamber is located at the northern end of the center hallway, and it occupies the space behind the clock niche. Without exception, these back chambers have only the minimum of trim details around the windows, doors

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and fireplaces.

Both the cellar and the attic contain noteworthy construction features. The foundation of the Ulmer House is constructed of fieldstone up to the sills: there are no granite capstones as are found on most houses of the period. The bottom half of the western chimney base is also of mortared fieldstone on top of which are laid a pair of massive sixteen inch square hewn timbers. These in turn support eight similarly sized timbers upon which the masonry construction sits. A plank door is affixed to the exterior of this unit and provides access to a small storage room lined with shelves and finished with a stone floor. In contrast, the eastern chimney base is of brick construction, and contains a pair of arches. However, additional massive timbers are incorporated into the side piers and used as transverse lintels. It is possible that this base and much of the chimney stack was re-constructed after the additional flues were installed for the second kitchen. Two examples of these massive timbers are also found in the attic framing. Here the hip and front/rear rafters intersect two large (14") six-sided timbers at roof level. However, rather than connecting to the front-to back girt in the floor below these timbers are cut off just below the rafter joints. Instead of being a king post tied into the floor system the timbers act as a simple wedge that support the rafters through equal but opposing forces.

Garage, early 20th century. Noncontributing.

Located just to the north of the ell and shed is a small, stud-framed, hipped roof garage. This small structure has two open bays on the south elevation, and a wood plank floor laid directly on the ground.

Animal shed, no date. Noncontributing

Located in the field to the northeast of the Ulmer House is a long, low, wood frame agricultural outbuilding. The ridge line of this structure runs north to south, and it has an exterior sliding door on the south gable end and a line of six windows on the east elevation. This structure has a metal roof and sits on low stone piers. Although it is known that there have been several barns associated with the Ulmer House over time, based on the construction and style, this building was constructed in the 20th century, and thus does not date to the period of significance.

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)

- EXPLORATION / SETTLEMENT
- ARCHITECTURE
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- MILITARY

Period of Significance

C. 1799 - 1812

Significant Dates

C. 1799
1812

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Ulmer, George (1755/6 - 1825)

Cultural Affiliation

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: _____

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The two-story, Federal style house located on the east bank of the Ducktrap River in Lincolnville is all that remains to testify to the micro-empire of George Ulmer, a once and future veteran, politician, and businessman, whose rapid rise to success after the American Revolution and rapid decline in fortunes in the first decade of the nineteenth century nonetheless had a lasting effect on the development of this section of mid-Coast Maine. Ulmer, and his brother Philip, were among the first settlers to the region after the Revolution, and over the next twenty years they developed mill seats on the River, built vessels in Ducktrap Harbor, and felled and processed timber from the densely wooded lands back of the coast. After becoming General Henry Knox's land agent, Ulmer secured important political appointments as Sheriff of Hancock County, Justice of the Peace, and Federal Tax Collector, and in turn served his community as an oft elected representative to the Massachusetts House and Senate. He obtained valuable land commissions for helping Knox legalize land claims, and ran surveys on the lands around Ducktrap. Yet the frontier on which George Ulmer lived and worked was anything but settled, and through a series of misfortunes, and in the face of localized revolt against Knox and his agents, Ulmer's power, prestige and fortune had all but disappeared by the end of the War of 1812. The George Ulmer House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A, for its association with the early settlement of Lincolnville, Northport, and Belmont; under Criterion B, for its association with an important local politician, businessman, and military commander; and under Criterion C as a good example of a Federal style mansion house.

It is often tempting for students of architecture and history to assume that the fortunes of the early settlers in a region follow a fairly predictable trajectory, (land is cleared, homes are built, more land is cleared and larger homes are built), and that success is measured in quantities of land and the scale and style of a residence. In this formulation the structures that survive, be they the mansion houses of the elite or the modest cape of a laborer, represent the apex of someone's personal power and financial acumen, at least during the period he or she resided in the community. But the house that George Ulmer built in 1799 stands to remind the generations that success is as easily lost as it is hard to achieve. Ulmer was both the beneficiary of the opportunities wrought by the founding of the nation, and a victim of a culture that remained fraught with contradictions and struggles for power. While the events that played out on the coast of Maine in the thirty years between the Revolution and War of 1812 were not without parallel elsewhere in Maine and the nation, Ulmer's experience is particularly useful for understanding this period of growing pains, in part due to the extensive research conducted by historian Alan Taylor into the settlement of the Maine frontier. The following five paragraphs are excerpted from Taylor's 1985 article "The Rise and Fall of George Ulmer: Political Entrepreneurship in the Age of Jefferson and Jackson," pages 52-57, and are quoted here to help summarize Ulmer's activities in the Ducktrap area:

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George Ulmer enjoys no entry in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, for his wealth and political prowess never exceeded the bounds of his own county: Hancock County, the District of Maine, Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Maine separated to become a state in its own right in 1820). In the first decade of the nineteenth-century he briefly became that frontier county's most powerful politician. Tall, broad-shouldered, and slightly corpulent, he was just the sort of physically impressive man who would be looked to for leadership in a still rough-and-tumble frontier district. In addition, he was renowned as a forceful, if not always precise or grammatical, speaker, for like many another ponderous early nineteenth-century politician his logic often lagged far behind his own confident assurance of his grandiloquence. Usually known as "General Ulmer" for his command of the county militia, he also collected the important and potentially lucrative appointive posts of county sheriff and justice of the peace. He secured these three appointive patronage plums because of his own vote-winning abilities both for himself - he regularly won election to either the Massachusetts House or to the State Senate - and for his fellow Democratic-Republicans running for national or statewide office.

Moreover, George Ulmer was not far from being the county's richest man. In his home town of Lincolnville he was certainly the wealthiest entrepreneur. The 1789 Federal Direct Tax Return for that community reveals that in Lincolnville alone he owned 1900 acres of land valued at nearly \$4400 and a mansion-house valued at \$1200. On all three counts, acreage, land value and house value, George Ulmer was Lincolnville's wealthiest taxpayer. Only his brother and business partner, Philip Ulmer, with 1024 acres valued at nearly \$2800 and \$800 house, came close. The drop-off after the Ulmer brothers was dramatic; the next most valuable house in town was assessed at \$350 and the next most valuable land holding was worth \$936. George Ulmer knew all of this well; he was also the area's federal tax assessor and collector. If anything, then the tax return may undervalue the economic dominance of the Ulmers in their community....

The brothers derived their wealth from land, the trees that grew upon that land, and their ability to obtain credit from Boston merchants, credit that enabled the brothers to cut the timber to build coasters and ships, cordwood to be hauled to meet Boston's growing demand for fuel, and pine lumber to be shipped to the West Indies. They owned every step of the process, contracting with settlers to procure the wood, operating sawmills to turn logs into plank and boards, running a shipyard to produce the vessels to carry all to market and managing a store to market the West India and English goods that their vessels returned with. So long as the winds, the seas, and the foreign navies did not destructively interfere, the Ulmers' enterprises promised steady, even spectacular, gains, the sort of which

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mansion-houses were built. The leading men of every Penobscot Bay and River town derived their fortunes and power by controlling and managing the critical transformation of Maine's then virgin timber into capital for reinvestment and for consumer goods.

Like other leading men, the Ulmers supplemented their income with every conceivable resource at hand. They built a toll bridge across the Ducktrap River and alienated their poorer townsmen by fencing off access to the adjoining ford obliging all who meant to pass to use their toll bridge. In addition the brothers and three other investors engaged in salvage operations to bring up the cannon and other valuable hardware aboard the sunken vessels in Penobscot River and Bay, vessels that had belonged to the ill-fated American expedition to recapture eastern Maine from the British during the Revolution. Philip supervised the brothers' shipping operations while George acted as land agent for the region's original title holder, General Henry Knox. George's sales to settlers for Knox netted the brothers commissions in the form of special price breaks by which they were able to cheaply obtain their large landed holdings. George even tuned his limp into a resource; although he conceded that it was not the result of any battle, he convinced the Massachusetts General Court that the limp was a product of his Revolutionary War service and so obtained a pension.

Ever alert to capitalize on every available resource, the Ulmers turned potential settler resistance into an opportunity to secure and even extend their holdings; they parlayed their capacity to deflate local settler opposition into proprietary recognition of their local predominance. Largely through the Ulmer's efforts most of the settlers in Ducktrap and the adjoining settlement of Canaan accepted Knox's compromise offer in 1788. While all the other settlers were restricted to buying a 200 acre maximum and most received just half of that, the brothers were allowed to buy up their entire existing holdings and much more, mostly at the modest price of four to five shillings per acre, about one third to one half of their market value. George's share alone amounted to 1942 acres. And for the moment the only payment demanded was a series of promissory notes secured by two mortgages, one from each brother. Knox also named George Ulmer his land agent responsible for retailing his lands to new settlers in the Ducktrap area....

When Knox, through fiat of the Massachusetts General Court in 1785, obtained control of the Waldo Patent, the resolve passed by the Court was ambiguous regarding the manner in which Knox would settle with those settlers/squatters who had been occupying 'his' lands, some since before the Revolutionary War. Reactions to Knox's new-found 'ownership' of the land among the settlers, (many who, like the Ulmers, had fought in the War), varied from skeptical to violent. The 1788 compromise was Knox's first attempt to negotiate a per acre price by which the settlers

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could obtain a warranty deed to the land they occupied and had improved. Although this price was inflated beyond what Revolutionary veterans were paying on publicly owned (State or District) land, approximately half of the settlers on the Waldo Patent and other Knox owned lands accepted the offer. After 1788 the price per acre steadily rose, and those that didn't accept the earlier offer formed the backbone of discontent that plagued Knox, and more immediately George Ulmer as his local representative, into the early 19th century.⁵

In the winter of 1796 while Ulmer and Knox were in Boston, the itinerant preacher Samuel Ely inspired insurrection among the area settlers, who threatened openly to burn down Ulmer's house and Knox's mansion Montpelier in Thomaston, and hinted that Knox might be poisoned. While the threats decreased after Ulmer returned in the spring, "in April Ely and his supporters exacted vengeance by tearing down the Ulmers' mill dam on the Ducktrap River, depriving the brothers of waterpower in the midst of the all-important sawing season." Twice later that summer the 'booms' that held George Ulmer's load of finished timber spars for Knox were removed under cover of night, allowing the valuable commodity to float into Penobscot Bay.⁶

Needless to say, the Ulmer brother's position in the region was somewhat tenuous. Although politically powerful and economically well-connected, much of their wealth was encumbered to creditors or proprietors, the prosperity of their mills was linked to the patronage of the local settlers; and their alliance with Knox made them a target of resentment and outrage. Settler discontent aside, this balance was easily upset by bad luck. When in 1797 the brothers lost two vessels, worth £1600 exclusive of the cargoes, Ulmer felt the need to diversify. "Dear Sir," he wrote to Henry Knox, "As wee are so unfortunate in navigation (my Brother haveing (sic) lost his second vesel and Cargo) and not wishing to be intirely inactive, I find I must pursue some other business difrent (sic) to what I have of late been Concerned in, in Order to support my family". This latest plan, to install a toll bridge across the Ducktrap River, with a mill dam under and a wharf adjacent, which Knox supported in part, had barely been commenced when Ulmer's lack of fortune engulfed his new home.⁷

Little is known about the mansion house that Ulmer built in 1796, other than its value was at least partially reflected in the 1798 Direct Tax Census assessment of \$1200.⁸ Visitors to the house

⁵Taylor, 1986, p 66-68.

⁶Taylor, 1990, p. 159;1986, p. 78

⁷George Ulmer to Henry Knox, 11 November 1797. Knox Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, (MHS) Roll 41, item 27. Note: the archaic use of the symbol *f* to stand for 's' has been removed from the quote, but other spelling and grammatical errors have been retained.

⁸Because schedule A and B of the Direct Tax Census has been lost for the Ducktrap properties it is not possible to determine how many dwellings and outbuildings comprised the assessment value of \$1200. However by 1806, when Ulmer first mortgaged his homestead to the Penobscot bank, three

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reported that the accommodations and hospitality had improved dramatically over the earlier log dwelling, but no description of the house prior to the fire has been identified. The following is Ulmer's report of the event to Knox. (Note: the archaic use of the symbol *f* to stand for 's' has been removed from the following transcription, but other spelling and grammatical errors have been retained.)

I am Extreemly unhappy to be under the necessity of so often informing you of my misfortunes nor would I now attempt it if you was not interested - On the 29th ultimo my house, our Company, Books, accts, notes, my winter Stock of provisions Sufficient for the year together with every kind of furniture and Cloathing (of which we had been indifatigable in Collecting Since we moved in) was Burnt to ashes leaving us with nothing except what we had on, and one bed, - but I desire to thank God my Spirits, and that of my whole family were never Greater, then at present I feel disposed to repair our loss with Industrious Exertions, our neighbours appear willing to help me all that their feeble means will admit of, and I trust in the Course of two years the Security, which I Gave you , will not be diminished - my misfortune at this time was ociasiond by a Joiner who was partitioning one of my rooms with a view to make an Office of one part and a shop for my daughter to take care of the other part - the Joiner was Call^d to dine at one Oclock leaving as he Say, nothing but the bark log in the fire place and but a verry few Shavings in the further part of the room - before a quarter past one, they were (for I was not home my selve) driven from the table by Smoak and Fire which forced into the room and [as?] one of my daughters opening a door into the entry to See what occaisiond the noise She heard - my family had only power to escape out of the house - leaving the effects of many years hard Service to be destroyed in half an hour - unfortunate for the public the mail bound east was in the house and Consumed - as my Scituation my dear Sir requires my Greatest exertions if you have anything that I can do to earn a trifle, or if it is in your power to be the means of helping me to Business, it will be receiv^d as a fresh mark of friend Ship from one whose bounty I am already So much indebted that it will I fear never be in my power to make any kind of Compensation.⁹

Ulmer relates a great amount of detail about the circumstances involved with the fire, probably to make his patron aware that it occurred while Ulmer was improving his house in conjunction with his business interests ("to make an Office...and a shop), and to dispel any notion that the fire was his fault ("for I was not home my selve"). It is interesting to note that the carpenter responsible for the fire is not named. While Ulmer does not overtly speculate that the fire was intentionally set, he certainly makes Knox aware of his scepticism, and ultimately leaves open the possibility that his house was

dwelling houses and three barns were on the property.

⁹George Ulmer to Henry Knox, 9 December 1798. Knox Papers, MHS, Roll 55, Item 53.

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burned as a consequence of his association with Knox, before finally and again, requesting his patron's help. Whether that 'trifle' was forthcoming or not, Ulmer is said to have 'rebuilt' the earlier house with the one that exists at present.

Historian Richard Bushman has established the context in which men like George Ulmer built their houses: they were among the emerging gentry who sought respect and polish through refinements expressed in behavior, attitude, occupation, dress, and, importantly, architecture. Throughout the 18th century in the older settlements of the American Colonies the colonial gentry cast off earlier generations of hall and parlor, or single cell houses and built small mansions with Georgian styling, central hallways, formal parlors, and decorative chimneypieces and moldings. For men who aspired to power and status in the Maine settlements that developed after the Revolution, the impetus was the same, however their architectural vocabulary more frequently encompassed the emerging Federal style. According to Bushman, the families who occupied these houses "exemplify a large class of people with modest fortunes and strictly local dignity who nonetheless constructed houses with the requisite formal parlors and open stairways adorned with balusters and newel. Although not ostentatious by later standards, these middling mansions reordered the relationship of houses and social class in the eighteenth century. The houses made it difficult for anyone with aspirations to social leadership to live in one of the modest, small houses that continued as the basic housing stock."¹⁰ Denys Peter Myers, who compiled the Maine Catalog reiterates this assertion, stating that in Maine, "the almost square hipped-roof house with central hall plan became ubiquitous for both upper and upper-middle classes."¹¹

The house known today as the Maj. General George Ulmer House was at least the third dwelling that he had built after arriving in Ducktrap with his brother Philip in 1784. George and Philip Ulmer had been born in the 1750s to a German immigrant in Waldoboro, Maine. They each served in the Continental Army during the Revolution. George was first stationed at St. Georges then went to Providence, and Valley Forge, before finally spending the last two years of the war in Camden and Georgetown, Maine, and achieving eventually the rank of Captain. Before serving in Camden with his brother, Philip also fought at Valley Forge and in the Penobscot Expedition. After the war was over they discovered the lightly settled Ducktrap River area and quickly executed their first land deals and built log dwellings. According to Taylor, "Several squatters had already taken up occupation beside the harbor and back into the watershed but they lacked the capital necessary to develop the site; for modest sums the Ulmers bought them out. The brothers then ran their own survey lines around the land embracing the entire basin. By 1785 the stream had four operating saw mills..."¹² Although they did not have an official deed to the property, when several years later Henry Knox entered the picture the Ulmers realized that they could profit most from retaining their mill seats and

¹⁰Bushman, p. 116.

¹¹Myers, p. 30.

¹²Taylor, 1985, p. 55.

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working with Knox than from resisting his offers. Yet while the Ulmer's advanced, most of their neighbors, even at the end of the century had not progressed past what was described as the 'poor low huts' that a visitor to Ducktrap reported in 1894.¹³ The houses that the Ulmers built in 1796 and rebuilt in 1799 were ones that certainly exceeded the basic housing stock of the area, both in form and ornamentation.

While Ulmer continued to act as Knox's land agent for several more years, the loss of his papers, notes and account books hampered his attempts to provide the documentation needed to satisfy either Knox or the settlers with regard to the length of time the land had been occupied and set the corresponding price for the land. At the turn of the 19th century Knox was also having financial troubles, and letters from Ulmer to Knox expressed the former's frustration that the latter was questioning the deals that Ulmer had made with the settlers, many of whom were now locating away from the coast in the back country. Finally, in "late 1801 Knox rebuked George Ulmer for several decisions involving land sales; humiliated, the Squire resigned, thereby losing not only his commissions as land agent but also the benefit of Knox's political patronage."¹⁴

Due to Knox's financial trouble he had to sell the two mortgages he owned on the Ducktrap complex to the Bank of the United States and to Wiscasset merchant Abiel Wood, who both foreclosed on Ulmer in 1805. Fearful of being turned off his land, and leaving the patent, Ulmer begged Knox to help him clear the mortgage in exchange for returning some of the lands that Knox had given to Ulmer in the back country. While it appears that Ulmer somehow got out of that jam, a year later he again mortgaged his homestead (315 acres, three houses, three barns and two mills), this time to the Penobscot Bank. To add salt to his wounds, as the County Sheriff Ulmer had constant trouble collecting the local taxes and serving and collecting judgments. In 1806 he was sued by John Longhurst and John Porter for over \$800 (either for debt, or for his inability to collect a judgement owed them, or both), and due to his inability to pay, the County Coroner was forced to sell at auction the right to redeem Ulmer's mortgage with the Penobscot Bank to the highest bidder.¹⁵ As if this wasn't difficult enough, Philip Ulmer- who was similarly in debt- was forced to sell his share of the enterprises, and "in the spring of 1807 George Ulmer and [the new partner Samuel] Whitney suffered \$6000 in damages when a spring freshet carried away their bridge, mills, and lumber. They rebuilt in time to suffer \$5000 more in damages in December 1807 when a second flash flood destroyed the complex."¹⁶

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¹³Francois Alexandre Frederic Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Lioncourt, as quoted in Taylor, 1985, p.

¹⁴Henry Knox Papers, Maine Historical Society, Box 20, 1799-1801; Taylor, 1985, p. 57.

¹⁵Book 31, page 213, Hancock Registry of Deeds.

¹⁶Taylor, p. 58.

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After losing his economic footing, Ulmer appealed through his political networks to obtain a military post that he hoped would stabilize his fortunes. The post he was ultimately given in Eastport during the British occupation was the least desirable, most thankless, and ultimately unbraided the last remaining threads of Ulmer's power and honor. According to the historian Joshua Smith, who along with Alan Taylor studied Ulmer's part in the War of 1812, the garrison at Fort Sullivan was basically unsupported by the War Department, and Ulmer had to buy food and coats for his troops to keep them from starving and freezing. Unable to pay even these debts he was thrown in jail and later after losing complete control of his post he was again arrested, eventually being stripped of his military commission.

In 1812 Ulmer finally lost possession of his house. In a matter of hours he paid off the mortgage from the Penobscot Bank, sold the house to John Russ and then watched Russ sell half of the property to Ulmer's son-in-law John Wilson. Unable to afford the property outright (for neither had attained the wealth that George Ulmer had leveraged in the last years of the 18th century to build the house) both Russ and Wilson took out mortgages on the property immediately. Within a few years Wilson lost control of his portion, which contained 115 acres and Ulmer's house. In 1820 Isreal Thorndike, Jr., David Sears and William Prescott (Boston creditors who came to own much of Knox's former lands) sold the property to Benjamin Carver and Esdias Morse, who two years later divided the house on a line "through the Center of the Ulmer Dwelling House". Carver received "one half of the Ulmer dwelling house the whole of the interior through the same below and above one half of the cellar and garret also one half of the barn also one half of the privelege (sic) of building a mill where the land lain out so as best to accommodate the mill with a yard and liberty to pass and repass to and from the County Road to said mill also one half of the Cobwork wharf on the upstream side and adjoining Ducktrap Bridge but not the ground on which it stands also one half of the blacksmith shop".¹⁷ The Ulmer House remained a two-family dwelling from this point until it was purchased by the present owners in 1999 and the two halves re-integrated.

The commencement of construction of the Ulmer House in 1799 corresponded with the beginning of Ulmer's personal decline. To a certain extent the house reflects the precipice on which he stood. An example of his continued access to the rich Ducktrap forest can be seen in the cellar where each of the large chimney bases contain multiple hand hewn structural timbers that measure at a minimum 16 inches on a side. Upstairs, all of the wainscot is comprised of a single pine board, between 20" and 22" in width, but in at least the front hall and the northeast chamber this width is not standardized among all the walls within the rooms, and thus the corresponding height of the chair rail varies as well. While there could be many reasons for this discrepancy, this may reflect a lessor skilled carpenter, a reduced access to finely milled boards, or Ulmer's weariness with the re-building effort. Ulmer's house also lacks the quantity of sophisticated carpentry details that were commonly found in other 'mansion houses' constructed in mid-coast Maine during the same period, such as the

¹⁷Unrecorded (?) deed, Esdias Morse to Benjamin Carver, 22 March 1822. Copy of deed located at the Lincolnville Historical Society, Lincolnville, Maine.

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Col. Isaac Reed House in Waldoboro, (NR 05000796) or the Ebenezer Alden House in Union (NR 75000100). Some questions also remain whether Ulmer ever fully completed the interior of the house. The Greek Revival features in the southeast bedroom and the plain, but strangely laid out rear rooms might either reflect the independent tastes and needs of the two families that occupied the dwelling or it is also possible that only the most important and most public rooms were completed by Ulmer as he struggled to maintain his public power and prestige.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is described by the Town of Lincolnville tax map 17, lot 49.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Between the time that George Ulmer arrived in Ducktrap (Lincolnville) in 1883 and his death in 1825 he owned vast, and constantly changing tracts of land in mid-coast Maine, including river basins, harbors, timberland, commercial, industrial and residential structures. In 1812 he was forced to sell his homestead, at that time described as containing 315 acres, two mills, three houses, and three barns. Within a few days the property was split into two parcels, and within a decade further divided by deed. The nominated boundaries represent that portion of the homestead parcel that was owned by George Ulmer prior to 1812, and is still legally associated with the home that Ulmer constructed in 1799.

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Photograph 1 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
6 April 2006
South facade facing northwest.

Photograph 2 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
6 April 2006
West elevation, facing east.

Photograph 3 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
6 April 2006
Front hall and staircase; facing north.

Photograph 4 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
6 April 2006
Decoration on stringboard, front hall; facing east.

Photograph 5 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
6 April 2006
Southwest (Dining) room: facing northwest.