

PH 0664171

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATA SHEET

RECEIVED FEB 28 1978

DATE ENTERED JUL 14 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

Kent Neighborhood Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Dorset West Road, ^{and} Nichols Hill Road, Lane Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Dorset

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Vermont

VICINITY OF

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Bennington

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple - See Continuation Sheet 4-1

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dorset

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Pavilion Building, Montpelier

STATE

Vermont 05602

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Kent Neighborhood Historic District, in the Town of Dorset, Vermont, is an intact group of residential buildings, centered primarily around the intersections of Dorset West Road, Lane Road and Nichols Hill Road.

The land within the district is of two distinct types: the area to the east of Dorset West Road, on both sides of Lane Road, is primarily open land with few large trees. The western part of the district, along Nichols Hill Road, is wooded and steeply inclined towards the base of Mother Myrick Mountain.

The architectural component of the district consists of 20 structures, of which 16 are historically or architecturally significant. These are loosely clustered around the intersection of Dorset West Road and Nichols Hill Road. All major buildings are residences or service buildings; no commercial enterprise exists within the district. Most of the houses are year-round residences, although some are used seasonally. Clapboarded wood frame is the predominant mode of construction, and the buildings are generally similar in scale.

Structures within the Kent Neighborhood Historic District are as follows: (Numbers refer to enclosed sketch map)

1. ^{photo 1} Marble monument, whose text reads: "Site of the Cephas Kent Inn where the first convention of the New Hampshire Grants was held in 1776. Erected in 1912 by the Vermont Society of Colonial Dames."

Cephas Kent was one of the earliest settlers here, arriving in late 1773 with his wife and nine children. He became an innkeeper and built a structure on this site. It is uncertain whether this building was his home, inn, or both. Most sources agree that the Dorset Conventions were held in the building on this site, regardless of its functional type.

2. ^{photo 2} Kent-Isham House, c. 1800-1810. Sited at the principal intersection in the district, this building is a visual anchor for its surroundings. It is a traditional early 19th century Vermont house. It is frame, sheathed with clapboards, five bays, two stories, central entrance, slate gabled roof with two exterior end chimneys. All windows are 6/6 and have slightly peaked lintels. The central window on the main elevation, second floor, has been altered to resemble casements.

The house was probably remodelled in the mid-19th century. This would account for the classical entry porch, with square piers, large entablature and panelled parapet. With the peaked lintels, this is the only classical detail on the exterior of the house.

To the rear (west) an ell has been added, probably still later in the 19th century. It includes porches with sawn brackets in the Italianate mode. In the early 19th century this was the home of Martin Kent, a son of Cephas. A recent owner of the house was Lincoln Isham, grandson of Abraham Lincoln.

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Photo 3
3. John Kent-Juba Kent House. Ell c. 1775; main block, c. 1850. Like many of the buildings in the district, this house had two distinct periods of building. The principal mass is Greek Revival, and its 2-1/2 story gable end faces the road. It is three bays wide, and three deep, clapboarded, with the entry in the right bay. This consists of panelled pilasters supporting a full entablature; smaller pilasters frame full-height sidelights. The jambs are panelled to match the panelling of the door. At the corners of the house are panelled pilasters which support a broad entablature with partial returns. Windows are 6/6, and there is an under-scaled louvered triangular vent in the pediment.

Attached to this is the earlier dwelling, built by Cephas' son John c. 1775. This section is also frame, gabled with slate, and two stories. Its ridge runs at right angles to that of the main block. Windows are smaller and abut the plain fascia above the second floor. A porch, which probably dates from the period of the main block, runs across the front of this section and is supported on panelled posts identical to the pilasters at the entrance.

The main section of the house was built by John's son, Juba Kent.

Photo 4
4. John Kent Hired Help House, mid-19th century. This is a very small, 1-1/2 story frame house, whose gable end faces the road, giving it a vaguely classical feel. The first story is three bays wide, with a plain entrance in the center. Above this is one window in the peak of the gable. There is a small cornice running along the front and side eaves.

This house was part of the John Kent-Juba Kent property (#3) for many years, and housed the hired farm help and his family. Its ownership is now separate from that of the former Kent farm.

Photo 5
5. Former schoolhouse, c. 1834. The northernmost building in the district, this residence was built as a school for the neighboring farms. The 1-1/2 story gable end contains a door and a window. There is an entablature at the eave line, but no returns. As is commonly seen in early Vermont schools, there is a group of three 9/6 windows at the rear of the left elevation.

6, 7, 9. Three wood frame garages which intrude on the historic character of the district.

8. Modern (1970's) house. Because of the materials, design, and scale it does not detract from the district but does not contribute to its historic integrity.

10. This house, at the end of a long drive, is said to have been moved at least once. It is frame with clapboards, two stories, five bays with central entrance, and has a gabled roof. It has been extensively remodelled and its location removes it from the immediate streetscape of Nichols Hill Road.

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Photo 2
11. This residence was converted to its present use from a cheese factory. It is frame, 1-1/2 stories, with clapboard siding and a slate gabled roof. The central door is in a tall vernacular surround with pilasters, transom light, and entablature. There is an exterior chimney at each end of the house. The four first floor windows are 12/8, while three six-light fixed sash windows are evenly spaced along the eaves. A small gabled roof dormer, side and rear ells were probably later 19th and 20th century additions. Original date of construction was probably before the middle of the 19th century.

12. A 2-1/2 story frame house of undetermined date. It is clapboarded, has a central chimney, and is two large bays wide with a smaller side ell. Massing and fenestration suggest a recent date of construction.

Photo 2
13. Alexander Kent House. The westernmost building in the district, this is a two-story frame house sheathed with clapboards. It is a five-bay "I" house, with central entry and two exterior end chimneys. It was built c. 1783 by Alexander Kent, son of Cephas, with additions in the late 19th century. Windows have been changed, and numerous ells and appendages added at the rear.

Photo 3
14. Kent-Fausett House. Built in two sections, it is generally agreed by historians that a portion of the building consists of an earlier structure moved to the site from another location. Extensive research by the present owner has led him to believe that the moved structure was the dwelling house of Cephas Kent, Sr. Equally studious consideration has led other historians to believe that the moved portion was the dwelling of Cephas Kent, Jr.

The present appearance of the house is of a gable front, 2-1/2 story Greek Revival main block, with side ell. The main block, which is three bays wide, has the entry in the left bay. This consists of pilasters supporting a heavy entablature, and incorporates sidelights. The building has a large cornice, with returns on the gable end. There are no corner pilasters.

The second floor of the main block contains a large neo-Palladian window in the gable end, which was added in the mid-20th century. It replaced two symmetrically placed windows. Probably at the same time, all windows were changed from 2/2 to 9/6, and the proportions of the first floor windows were changed.

The ell is two bays wide, two stories, also with a slate gabled roof. Its ridge is at right angles to that of the main block. It has one exterior end chimney, probably added; plain cornerboards; and a small box cornice with partial returns. Second floor window lintels are flush against the fascia of the eaves, indicating a possible construction date of the late 18th century.

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15. This 1-1/2 story frame house probably dates from around the middle of the 19th century. Its gable end faces the road, but the entrance is in the side (west) facade. The door is framed by a narrow surround with an entablature.

The house has had numerous additions, not all of which have been in keeping with its architectural character. These include an exterior chimney, front and rear shed dormers, rear ells, and a projecting bay window.

16. Residence; frame, 1-1/2 story, with exterior chimney of uncoursed rubble. Because of its relatively recent date of construction, it does not contribute to the district.

17. U.S. Kent House. This large frame house is 2-1/2 stories, and the gable front is three bays wide. The side elevations contain three very broad bays, and the principal entrance is in the center bay of the left (south) facade.

There is a wide entablature, with small returns, above colossal panelled pilasters. On the side facades, the second floor windows are small six-pane fixed sash. The entry is relatively simple, with attenuated pilasters supporting an entablature.

Although the house presents a classical appearance, its massing suggests an earlier building which was remodelled in the mid-19th century. It was built by Uriel S. Kent, son of Martin and grandson of Cephas Kent, Sr.

18. George Brainsford Holley House. Holley was married to Eliza Kent, a daughter of Martin; her brother Uriel lived next door (#17 above).

This house is very similar to the John Kent-Juba Kent House (#3 above). It is a gable-front Greek Revival frame house, sheathed with clapboards. It is three bays wide, with the door in the left bay. The entry, which is under a one-story porch, consists of panelled pilasters supporting a full entablature. The recessed door is flanked by full-height sidelights.

There is a large cornice around the eaves, with partial returns supported by colossal panelled pilasters. In the peak of the gable is a triangular louvered vent. Windows have been changed to 1/1.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the house is the porch on the main facade. This spans the full width of the house and is supported on marble piers similar to the entry pilasters. A wing extending from the right (north) side of the house has a similar porch (as does the John and Juba Kent House), with more of these stone piers.

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The main section of this house is so similar in detailing to the John Kent-Juba Kent House that one is led to suspect they were built by the same person, or within a short time span. Juba and Eliza Kent were cousins, and each married a member of the Holley family.

George B. Holley was a major figure in the development of marble quarries in the Dorset-Danby area. His holdings were later consolidated in the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont. The house is still owned by Holley's descendants.

19. This is a two-building farm complex apparently unrelated to the Kent Family. It consists of a main house, which is frame, 1-1/2 stories, with gabled roof oriented towards the main road; and a smaller, 1-1/2 story house whose upper level is lit by a wide shed dormer. Both buildings appear to date from relatively late in the 19th century.

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Other buildings in the district were built by or for members of the Kent Family. Cephas Kent, Sr. arrived in Dorset with his wife and nine children in late 1773, and immediately began holding church services. The first town meeting was held in his home in February of 1774. He later kept an inn in the district. Cephas Kent, Sr. died in 1809.

Several of Kent's children remained in the area, intermarrying with other early families such as the Manleys, the Sykeses, the Holleys and the Martindales.

Although the Kent Neighborhood Historic District began as a bustling crossroads community and stopping point for travellers, growth seems to have stopped before the Civil War. Today there are only a few modern intrusions and with the exception of the late 19th century farm complex and a small number of 20th century dwellings, the area is virtually intact. Its architecture represents vernacular Vermont building traditions before the Civil War, with its emphasis on classical forms not completely understood by the builders. The other chief architectural component is the early houses which were never stylistically remodelled, and retain their essentially astylar appearance.

As noted above, the District is also significant from an historical perspective. Its buildings and fields were witness to several key events in the formation of Vermont as a free and independent state, which it remained for fourteen years before joining the United States.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1775-1776

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kent Neighborhood Historic District is significant both for its architecture and its history. With a few exceptions, the village stands much as it did in the early 19th century, and it has seen few modern additions. Most of the construction which has taken place has been mid-19th century renovation, updating the Federal period houses to Greek Revival appearances.

This section of the Town of Dorset played an important role in the early history of Vermont as an independent political entity. Local tradition, which has not been confirmed by written records, states that the Green Mountain Boys, under the leadership of Ethan Allen, mustered in the fields between Dorset West Road and the Battenkill in the spring of 1775, prior to the rendezvous at Castleton which preceded the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. Shortly after the Fort was seized, the Committees of Safety called a political convention to be held at Dorset on July 26, 1775. This meeting resulted in the reorganization of the Green Mountain Boys and the affiliation with the Continental Army.

Second and third Dorset conventions were held in 1776 to seek a solution to the conflict over land titles in present-day Vermont. Land grants had been issued by both New York and New Hampshire and numerous settlers had conflicting or ambiguous deeds. These conventions led to the first suggestions that Vermont would be organized as a separate entity, rather than being annexed to New York or New Hampshire.

The final and most decisive Dorset convention met on September 25, 1776. Thirty-five towns sent delegates. They resolved to support the Continental Army, but only as representatives of "that district of land which we inhabit," rather than as partners with the other thirteen colonies. The delegates further determined to form "that district of Land commonly called and known by the name of the New Hampshire Grants into a separate district . . ." Although the "Free and Independent State of Vermont" was not proclaimed until a seventh convention at Windsor in 1777, the Dorset meetings had precipitated this final event and had determined that Vermont would become a sovereign state. It remained independent until joining the Union in 1791.

The Dorset conventions were held in the Kent Neighborhood Historic District in a structure belonging to Cephias Kent, Sr. and variously referred to in contemporary accounts as "Mr. Kent's house," "the house of Mr. Cephias Kent, innkeeper," "the dwelling house of Mr. Cephias Kent, innholder," and "Cephias Kent's." A marble monument erected in 1912 marks the approximate site of this building which was either moved or destroyed at an early date.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Allen, Ira - History of the State of Vermont, London: J. W. Myers, 1798.
- Proctor, Redfield - Records of Conventions in the New Hampshire Grants for the Independence of Vermont, 1776-1777; Washington, D.C., 1904

Abstract of Title of Kent-Fausett House in possession of owner.
 Photostat of "Survey of Martin Kent Property" by Steven Martindale in possession of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 210[±]

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6,5,5	3,6,0	4,7,8,8	7,3,0	B	1,8	6,5,3	7,7,0	4,7,8,8	3,2,5
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	1,8	6,5,3	5,8,0	4,7,8,8	5,0,0	D	1,8	6,5,3	9,0,0	4,7,8,9	1,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION E 18 / 654-470 4789-760

See Continuation Sheet 10-1

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles H. Ashton

ORGANIZATION

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

DATE

November, 1977

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

STATE

Vermont

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William B. Pinney

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

February 23, 1978

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles H. Ashton

DATE

7-14-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William B. Pinney

DATE

July 13, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Walton, E. P. Records of the Committees of Safety, Governor and Council of the
State of Vermont. Montpelier:

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The boundary of the Kent Neighborhood Historic District is described as follows: beginning at point A, the intersection of the West Branch of the Batten Kill with Lane Road; thence proceeding generally northwest (upstream) along the center line of the West Branch and the center of the large pond from which it flows, to point B, the intersection of the center line of this pond with a line running generally northeast-southwest, on a bearing of 223^o, and which crosses Dorset West Road at approximately right angles at a point opposite a private drive which point is approximately 375 feet southeast of where Gilbert Brook crosses Dorset West Road; thence proceeding generally south-southwest along said line, crossing Dorset West Road at said drive, and proceeding to a point C, 500 feet from Dorset West Road on said line; thence proceeding generally southeast, parallel to Dorset West Road and 500 feet west of it, to point D, the intersection of this line with a line parallel to Nichols Hill Road and 575 feet northwest of it; thence proceeding generally west and southwest, along said line parallel to Nichols Hill Road, to point E, the intersection of said line with a line crossing Nichols Hill Road at right angles and passing 150 feet southwest of the southwestern (rear) facade of the Alexander Kent House (13 in district); thence proceeding generally southeast along said line, which has a bearing of 133^o, crossing Nichols Hill Road, to point F, the intersection of this line with a line running parallel to Nichols Hill Road, and 300 feet southeast of it; thence generally northeast and east, parallel to Nichols Hill Road, to point G, the intersection of this line with Goodman Brook, approximately 375 feet from Dorset West Road; thence generally east, along the center line of Goodman Brook, to point H, the point of confluence of Goodman Brook and the West Branch of the Batten Kill; thence generally northwest and west, along the center of the West Branch, to point A, the point of beginning.

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Dorset Neighborhood S.D. - VT.

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Numbers refer to enclosed sketch map.

- ✓1. Dorset Historical Society, c/o Mr. Arthur Gilbert, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓2. Mr. Roland Beers, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓3. Miss Mabel Gilbert, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓4. Mrs. Frederick Gilbert, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓5. Ms. Edna Caney, Dorset, Vermont 05251
6. Intrusion
7. Intrusion
- ✓8. Ms. Evelyn Prescott, Dorset, Vermont 05251 (intrusion)
9. Intrusion
- ✓10. Mr. A. Corwin Frost, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓11. Mr. Codman Hislop, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓12. Mr. Arthur Jones, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓13. Mr. Craig Wheaton-Smith, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓14. Mr. William Dean Fausett, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓15. Ms. Eleanor Lewis, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓16. Ms. Elizabeth Jennings, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓17. Ms. Flora Richards, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓18. Mrs. Jacques Mitchell, Dorset, Vermont 05251
- ✓19. Mrs. Caroline Cabot, Dorset, Vermont 05251