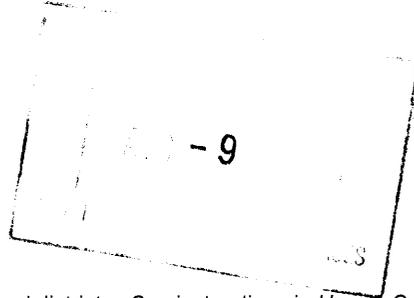


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Randall - Hildreth House
other names/site number Cedarhurst, Hildreth Mansion

2. Location

street & number 806 Foreside Road N/A not for publication
city or town Topsham N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Sagadahoc code 023 zip code 04086

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] 8/2/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State 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] 9/22/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson Beall

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	
4	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC / Multiple Dwelling

AGRICULTURE / Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE / Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID - 19TH CENTURY / Federal

MID - 19TH CENTURY / Greek Revival

VICTORIAN / Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation GRANITE

walls WOOD / Weatherboard

roof METAL / Steel

other WOOD

BRICK

Narrative Description

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

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MATERIALS, continued

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD / Shingle

walls ASPHALT

roof ASPHALT

DESCRIPTION

The Randall -Hildreth House is a notable example of a Mansion House set on the rural Maine landscape at the end of the eighteenth century. Set behind a hedge of cedar trees on a broad grassy plain that slopes gently across unbroken meadow to the banks of Merrymeeting Bay a half mile to the east, the Georgian-Federal house and its dependancies emit a stately grandeur that is continued on the interior. Built in 1800, the Randall -Hildreth House consists of a two story, hipped-roof main structure flanked on its northwest and southwest corners by a pair of two-story ells. Further to the south, and aligned with the eastern face of the southern ell two barns are nestled together. Their gable-fronted facades front a driveway that swings around the cedar trees and a one-story chicken house before joining the road to the southeast. A fourth, one-story, out-building, now used for automobile storage, is located behind and below the northwestern ell; a second driveway leading from the road to the northeast accesses this side of the property and continues behind the buildings. The east facing Randall -Hildreth mansion house is built on the edge of a natural terrace that descends slightly to the west of the building. This land form enabled the construction of a walk-out cellar on the west side of the main house and ells. The building sits on a granite foundation capped with a wooden watertable, and the roof is covered with modern seamed metal.

At the heart of the property is the Randall -Hildreth House, which was built in 1800. The two story, hipped-roof, center-hall, double-pile house has two brick chimneys rising to either side of the central ridge on the roof. While the house contains formal entrances on each of the north, south and east elevations. The primary facade is on the east, which faces both the road (which curves around the house) and the river. The five-bay facade is characterized by two-over-two windows, which on the second floor are below a very narrow frieze board located under the projecting eaves. All four corners of the main house are detailed with thick wooden quoins, while the soffits of the roof are decorated with ogee modillions and wooden dentils. At the center of this facade is the prominent entryway which contains a six-field, raised-panel door which is surrounded on three sides by Greek Revival-era transom and sidelights. These windows in turn are flanked by wide, fluted pilasters on tall plinths. The capitols of the pilasters are obscured by the roof construction of a small, but ornate porch that defines and encloses the entry way. This open porch consists of several incongruous elements. The three-sided, compound-roof has a pediment on the east which is detailed with the same molding found on the soffits. The pediment and roof are supported on turned Victorian porch

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supports, with diminutive decorative spandrel brackets in the corners. The porch is further decorated with Asian-inspired ornamental banisters and a set of large granite steps. It is likely that the pediment was originally affixed directly to the facade of the house and repositioned when the porch was added in the late 19th century.

The three-bay south elevation of the main house has a center door with Georgian-style surround comprised of wide pilasters under a thick entablature and three-light transom. A pair of two-over-two windows flank the center bay on each floor. On this facade the first floor windows are capped with a thick crown-molded hood; unfortunately this stylistic detail has been removed on the east elevation. This fenestration pattern is mirrored on the structure's north elevation, however on this side of the house a late 19th century, Queen Anne inspired, screened porch encloses the door and north western windows, as well as the primary door to the north ell. As with the soffit of the entry porch on the east facade, modillions and dentils have been added to the soffit of the side porch to match the ornamentation on the roof. Additional detailing includes porch supports and railings which match those on the front entry. The rear elevation of the main house is three bays wide and contains original twelve-over-twelve windows with 8" x 6" glass and crown-molded hoods. The center window on the first floor has been removed.

The north ell, which was attached to the house in the 1860s, according to family tradition, is a low-posted, two bay, gable sided half-cape with one chimney protruding through the south edge of the roof ridge. The western roof plane has been altered by the addition of a shed dormer, which along with a full basement, grows this structure to a full three stories on the western side. The southern ell is built around the frame of a high-posted, center chimney cape. Three bays on the east side of this ell two contain a center door with sidelights and a pair of replacement sash windows. Set on a granite foundation, this structure has been extensively renovated during the 1990s and only the frame, (now partially exposed on the interior), and the base for the center chimney attests to its configuration when attached to the house in the 1840s. The ells are appended to the main house at the western corners of the north and south walls: the structures only overlap the main house by six to eight feet. Although altered on the interior and attached many decades after the main house was constructed, functionally and physically the ells are secondary structures that support, but do not impede upon the integrity of the main structure. The addition of both of these structures reflect the changing spatial requirements of the Randall and Hildreth families through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as discussed more fully in the Statement of Significance.

On the interior, the William Randall House exhibits fine craftsmanship from the Federal, and to a lesser extent, Georgian eras. As originally designed the house contained a front parlor and back room on either side of the center hallway. Each room had a fireplace located on one of the two chimney stacks. The front hallway contains a straight run staircase, which is traditionally ascribed to the local architect-builder Samuel Melcher (1775-1862). The broad stair case features mahogany grain-painted treads, and turned, simple, Georgian-style balusters set under a graceful Federal handrail. A band of reeded trim encircles the stairwell opening and wraps around the base of the balustraded balcony over the hall. Delicate ogee mouldings decorate the ends of the treads, wide-board wainscotting capped with a compound chair rail

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flank the walls, and the cornice contains an ogee crown moulding with dentils set on an ovolo molded frieze. Similar stylistic elements are found in each of the front rooms, which also contain paneled, recessed window boxes with interior, sliding shutters, chair rail, complex cornices, wainscotting and baseboards. Each of the fireplace surrounds in the front rooms feature excellently crafted and detailed Federal mantels surmounted by wide wooden overmantel panels. The interior room partitions are 2 1/4" thick ship-lapped board walls. Six panel pegged doors with ovolo-molded fielded panels lead to the side entrance halls, or to built-in cupboards between the front and back rooms (the cupboard in the southeast parlor has been opened into a hall). Like the front, the back half of the house contains two large rooms separated by a smaller room that was created after later truncating the full length of the stair hall. The southwestern room contains one of the original twelve-over-twelve, 3/4" quarter round molded muntin Federal windows as well as cased corner posts (which are concealed in the thick walls of the front rooms). The trim and ornamentation in the southwestern room is much more sparse than in the front rooms and the fireplace surround is a simple Greek Revival board cut in a pediment shape and supported on plain vertical pilasters. In the northwestern rear room the fireplace retains a simple Federal-style surround without a mantle, but which is surmounted by a framed architrave containing a single 29" wide panel. In this room, the window trim, wide-board wainscot, architrave and overmantel panel on the fireplace, all feature decorative grain painting which mimics quarter-sawn oak. The floor in this room is of wood parquet, while in the northeast parlor the floor is finished with a faux ebony and marble checkerboard pattern. Both the front and rear fireplaces on the north side of the building have been filled with Franklin inserts, and in the northwest room retrofitted cranes and hooks give the impression that this room was used as a kitchen. The closet in this room was updated late in the 19th century with the addition of drawers, counters and shelves for use as a pantry. In the rear corners of each of the western rooms are the doors that connect the main house to the ells. In the northwest room this doorway is also grain painted, reinforcing the assertion that this ell was added before the room was redecorated near the end of the 19th century.

In the southwest corner of the dining room is an enclosed stairwell to the cellar and the second floor. The walls enclosing the staircase are hand planed and beaded wide boards with an applied chair rail. Above the chair rail the boards are painted, but below the molding they are grain painted to match the rest of the finish in the room. A second, three-story staircase, recently removed, was located in the northwest corner of the other back room, although this staircase led to a crawl space rather than a fully excavated cellar. On the second floor, each of the back stairs emptied directly into a rear bedroom. As with the first floor the chambers each contain a fireplace, next to which a short side hallway connects the front and back rooms. In both of the front chambers the fireplace surrounds include a frieze of metopes and triglyphs and an ogee molded mantle. Located over the best parlor, the northeast chamber also contains wide pine wainscot, while the southeast parlor has sliding shutters. All of the upstairs rooms contain chair-rail and crown molding, some of which feature the same pierced dentils seen on the first floor. The window at the eastern end of the wide second floor hall is set in a shuttered window well with a low seat.

Access to the attic is gained via a steep staircase in the northwest chamber. The framing of the hipped roof is rather unusual: two massive (10 x 9") king posts are suspended from the roof ridge and rafter

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through the use of a wedged and pegged dovetail joint. The hewn king posts are then lined and braced to a north-south running tie beam. No studs are present under the hip rafters, and the broad floor is partially suspended from the roof by the king posts.

One of the Randall-Hildreth House's most unusual features is the cellar kitchen located under the dining room in the northwest corner of the house. This subterranean room was reached through the diningroom staircase, and was lit by a single twelve-over-twelve window and a three-quarter height, clinch-nailed batten door. The fireplace is set on the western side of the northern chimney base.

The ceiling, western wall and portions of the fireplace wall are plaster over riven lath (or brick), while the northern wall of the room consists of the parged field-stone foundation. Most of the room is floored with two layers of wide pine boards set on stone. Extending for four feet, eight inches in front of the chimney base and fire box, the floor is brick laid in clay: directly over this hearth the ceiling is lower, but still plastered. A hand planed transverse beam with a quarter-round edge bead separates the two ceiling levels. Numerous wrought iron hooks and pintles are embedded in the beam.

The chimney base is nine-feet two-inches wide. An additional two feet of newer brick construction fills in the remaining space between the base and a partition wall that defines a storage room to the south. The northern half of the base contains the 33" deep, angled firebox with a five-feet, ten inch aperture. The firebox is 40 inches high, and the opening is supported on an iron lintel that extends over the beehive oven to the south. Under the bake oven is a clean out topped with a wooden lintel, and over the bake oven the brick face of the base has been pierced by a modern exhaust duct. A long wooden panel, covered with plaster and topped by a wood lintel, is positioned over the firebox. The eastern side of the chimney base contains a brick arch with embedded wooden shelves. With the exception of the stone-floored storage room to the south of the kitchen, the remainder of the cellar is unfinished.

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 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1800

C. 1840

C. 1860

Significant Dates

1800

C. 1840

C. 1860

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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 Randall - Hildreth house is a notable example of an early 19th century rural mansion house with elements of Georgian and Federal architecture that was built for local gentry and occupied by his family for the next 196 years. The twin-chimney, center hall, double-pile house contains good examples of Federal woodworking on the interior and features an extremely rare cellar kitchen. The house was stylistically updated slightly over the next five generations as new architectural styles were adopted on the best houses in the region, and thus it also reflects some of the most prevalent 19th century stylistic trends including the Greek Revival and Queen Anne. Functionally, the Randall - Hildreth House is an example of a type of floor plan that was easily and practically divided into two distinct sets of living quarters with separate entrances and mirror interior layouts. Although the configuration of these spaces changed periodically, the structure housed more than one family group in separate apartments for at least half of the 19th century and the several decades into the next, eventually adding two ells to further accommodate the occupants. The Randall - Hildreth House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architecture as a structure that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of Federal and Georgian Period architecture while at the same time reflects the evolving stylistic taste of the region, and the expanding spatial requirements of its occupants.

The Town of Topsham is stretched along the banks of the Androscoggin River to the south and west and Merrymeeting Bay on the east. The village settlement is located in the southern most section of town, where it is geographically and culturally intertwined with the larger town of Brunswick on the southern side of the river. Beyond the village the town is characterized by rural landscapes which belie the community's historic agricultural economy.¹ There were several unsuccessful attempts to settle the area between 1669 and 1717 (when the Pejepscot Company was formed), and by the 1750s there were still only 18 families and 12 dwellings in the town. (Topsham General Committee, p. 9). However, during the second half of the century the population of the town increased steadily, reaching the critical mass to support incorporation in 1764. Foreside Road, as the name suggests, unfolds along the western shore of the Androscoggin River as it meets the Bay. The land along this early highway is generally fertile and some of the towns first settlers established their farms along its length, including William Randall, who arrived in town in 1766.

Historian Richard Bushman has established the context in which men like William Randall 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 chimney pieces and moldings. For men of this ilk in the Maine settlements that developed only after mid-century, or the Revolution, the impetus was the same, however in many places

¹Lumber harvesting and milling were also major economic forces in Topsham.

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including Topsham their architectural vocabulary 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.” 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. “ (Myers, p. 30).

The Randall - Hildreth House was not William and Jane Randall’s first home in Topsham; he had emigrated from Scituate, Massachusetts in 1766 to join his three brothers who had already purchased land from the Pejepscot Proprietors. The 1798 Federal Tax Census enumeration for Randall indicates that he owned one house, (no outbuildings) worth \$430. While this was higher than the average value of the 92 houses in town (\$284), it was substantially less than the houses of several of his neighbors. It is not known if Randall’s earlier house was located on the same land as his later one, although he had owned that parcel for over thirty years, and close inspection of the frame and foundation suggests that an earlier structure may be incorporated within the later house². The new house that William Randall built in 1800 was one that certainly exceeded the basic housing stock of the area, both in form and ornamentation.

It is difficult to gauge Randall’s level of distinction in Topsham from the documentary record. When he settled in Topsham in 1766, he initially bought “fifty acres of Ezra (his brother), and together with Daniel (another brother), eighty-five acres of land of his brother Paul, and fifty acres of William Thorne, Jr.,” (Wheeler, p. 849). By 1798 he held 328 acres of land: a sizeable estate. He was an early member of the First Parish Church in Topsham, and served as a town selectman in 1776, and on the Committee of Correspondence and Safety in 1778 and 1785. In 1783 he married Jane Patten, the daughter of Actor Patten, one of the town’s founders and a neighbor on Pleasant Point; together they had three children, Jane, William Jr. and Benjamin. According to several accounts Randall had the first sleigh in Topsham, imported from England, and William King, the first Governor of Maine, was a frequent guest at the house. Described as a farmer, and a ‘man of means and influence, Randall’s land stretched from the Androscoggin River to the Muddy River (Webber). The scale of the house that Randall built, and its unusual combination of Federal and Georgian detailing, served to create a residence that not only made a dramatic

²A portion of the Randall - Hildreth House’s frame was exposed by the property owners during the preparation of this nomination. On the west wall of the house the first floor girt was discontinuous and terminated at what is now an interior wall post. This post was also intersected at a ninety-degree angle by a ceiling beam that may have been an original first floor plate for the northern half of the house. Directly under this beam is a fieldstone foundation wall in the western part of the cellar. Additional testing of the building fabric, including dendro-chronology and paint analysis would be necessary to determine if elements of an earlier structure are present within the current house.

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statement on the landscape, but also proclaimed itself the residence of a solid, established and prosperous family.

On the exterior, the Randall house is not an example of the Federal architectural style that was being embraced by Randall's compatriots in Topsham Village at the turn of the 19th century. Randall, or his builder, appears not to have relied on the ideas proffered in pattern books or by local builders like Samuel Melcher, but drew inspiration from earlier precedents located in older communities in Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. These houses tended to date from the mid-eighteenth century, and are the earlier, Georgian, examples of the emerging elite mansion houses that Bushman references. They are the houses of the successful families in places such as Scituate, Massachusetts, from where the Randall family emigrated. There are several conventions found on the Randall-Hildreth house that reference this Georgian aesthetic: the wooden quoins in the corners of the building, the crown molded window hoods over the twelve-over-twelve light sash (or their replacements) and the application of ogee modillions and dentils under the cornice of the hipped roof. While the form of the north and south side doors was found in both the Georgian and Federal period, the heavy entablature and exaggerated swollen pilasters are more characteristic of the earlier, rather than the more refined later, period. Prior to his arrival in Maine, Randall could have been exposed to numerous examples of mid-18th century houses with these features along the shore of Massachusetts, south of Boston. A more local example of this style of house is found in Phippsburg, about 12 miles south of the Randall Homestead on the Kennebec River (which joins the Androscoggin River in Merrymeeting Bay). The McCobb-Hill-Minot House was built in 1773-74 on the banks of the River. This structure is twin-chimneyed, with a hipped roof, quoins, crown molded window hoods, and is almost square in plan. The front door has fluted Doric pilasters with an entablature capped by a denticulated triangular pediment. According to Myers, "it has been speculated that the McCobb-Hill-Minott House, which occupies a conspicuous site near mouth of the Kennebec River, may well have had an influence on other dwellings up the Kennebec and down the coast." Although these examples contain additional Georgian elaborations not present on the Topsham example, the historical reference of the Randall house is a clearly linked to Georgian examples.

On the interior of the Randall house, the four-over-four plan that developed in the Georgian period and was prevalent throughout the first half of the 19th, displays a Federal influence. While the plank walls between the front and rear rooms were painted rather than plastered, and the fireplace entablature tended towards simple wide-board raised panels, the cornice moldings, fireplace surrounds, door and window trim are all composed of well proportioned and excellently executed Federal moulding profiles. In both the southeast and northeast parlors delicately paneled window wells contain sliding shutters and flared window seats. Some of the finest woodworking in the house is located in the front hallway.

Although as Bushman points out "only the grandest houses had stair passages that ran entirely through

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the center”, this was one of the key features of the Randall property as originally built.³ According to family tradition, the front hallway was designed by Samuel Melcher III, (1775 - 1862), one of the region’s most noted housewrights, and probably the most influential builder working in Brunswick and Topsham at the turn of the 19th century. Working from the last decade of the 18th century through the 1840s Melcher is recognized for his numerous commissions at Bowdoin College in the early part of his career and a spate of church design in the 1830s. In between, he designed many of Topsham’s and neighboring Brunswick’s most elite residences, including the James Purinton House, (c. 1800), the Dr. Benjamin Porter House (1802-3), the Nathaniel Walker House (1802-03), and the Holden- Frost House (1805-6), all in the Topsham Historic District (NR: 78000198) and the Prof. Parker Cleaveland House (1805-06) in the Federal Street Historic District in Brunswick, (NR: 76000092). Although the existing Melcher ledger books at Bowdoin College do not cover the years when the Randall house was built, comparison with examples of his other properties strengthen his affiliation with the house. With reference to the Porter, Walker and Cleaveland Houses, the “principal rooms are very spacious and exhibit a wealth of detailed caring in their cornices and door and fireplace frames,” which can be said of the Randall property as well. The central staircase was a particular focal point in a Melcher design, but rather than allowing the hall to run continuously through the house as was done at the Randall house, he chose to “erect a wall about two-third of the way through the hall in order to create opposing front and rear staircases, usually with doorways on the main floor and landings.” (Shipman, 1988). While this design did not (initially) occur at the Randall place, the unusually wide staircase with turned balusters, complex crown moulding, tread-end carvings, and reeded trim elevate the front hallway (and the adjoining rooms) beyond the simply functional, and point to the hand of a talented craftsman. Interestingly, all of the verified domestic commissions by Samuel Melcher (of which this is not one) are located in village or city settings. If indeed the Randall house was one of his early projects it would also be his only known design in a rural setting.

In the basement of the Randall-Hildreth house is a very rare cellar kitchen with a plastered ceiling, wood plank floor and large brick fireplace with cooking hearth. This kitchen is accessed via the staircase in the dining room (northwest room) and has a single twelve-over-twelve sash window (covered with iron bars) and a batten door to the exterior. According to the accounts of family members in the early part of the 20th century, this was the only kitchen in the house until the southwest ell was attached in the 1840s. In the Northeast cellar kitchens are found in Federal or Georgian houses built on terraced or sloping lots in urban situations or riverine communities: there are multiple examples in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire area and in Essex County, Massachusetts.⁴ However, the evidence for cellar kitchens is almost unknown in

³A 1909 newspaper article by Harry C. Webber on the Randall-Hildreth House states “The halls were built to run directly through the house,” however the back third of the hall was closed off and a room created in the center of the rear pile. The lath in this wall is known as ‘accordian lath’ and was commonly used prior to 1850.

⁴Richard Candee (architectural historian) and Richard Irons, (restoration mason), personal communication.

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Maine. Archaeological investigations at the 1820 Ruggles House in Columbia Falls (NR: 70000081) revealed the presence of a cellar fireplace in the now destroyed ell. Across the street, the Samuel Bucknam House, 1821 (NR: 78000203) also had a cellar fireplace, albeit now in great disrepair. Both of these structures were built by Aaron Sherman, a housewright who had also moved to Maine from Duxbury Falls, Massachusetts, about ten miles south of Randall's home in Scituate. Although it is likely that there are other examples of cellar kitchens in Maine, no others are known at this time.

The presence of cellar kitchens was more common in Southern states where the coolness of partially excavated basements offered cooks a work space during the hot summers. In Maine, the temperatures seldom rose to the levels of heat and humidity found in the South, Mid-Atlantic, or even in Massachusetts. In the vast majority of the four-over-four double pile houses the kitchens were placed in one of the rear rooms, or in an ell. Adjacent to this kitchen is the storeroom which is lined with shelves and floored with flat stone slabs. Whether Randall chose to install his kitchen in the cellar because of climate, terrain, traditions, or other spatial or functional factors is not known. However, the bake oven, hearth, brick floor, plaster ceiling and firebox are extraordinary examples of this architectural variation.

Due to the location of the only kitchen in the basement, the entire first floor could have originally been given over to social rather than work functions. Because the house had formal three exterior doors a fluidity of function and navigation was inherent in the floor plan. By entering either the front hall or side halls family members could access all of the original four downstairs rooms directly from the exterior, and this enabled the family great latitude in how they utilized the house. Between 1800, when Randall built the house, and 1933 when his great-great grandson Alvah H. [Harold] Hildreth inherited the house, the structure was apparently shared by more than one family in seven out of 13 census counts. In general this occurred when offspring matured and married. For example, the nuclear family that lived in the house in 1800 expanded into two households encompassing the families of William Randall Sr and William Randall Jr in 1810 and 1820. After the passing of the elder Randall in 1825 his son took over the house (and incorporated the widow Jane Randall into his household until her death in 1832). Over the next twenty odd years the younger William's family resided in the house, and during this time they updated the front entry with Greek Revival pilasters and re-framed the fireplace in the southwest room with a simple Greek - peak surround. According to family tradition the ell was added in the 1840s, and as originally configured it contained a kitchen and parlor on the first floor and two chambers above. By 1850 the house was again divided: William Jr's shrinking household (which now included a hired farm hand) inhabited one section of the house, while the other part was shared between his recently widowed son Elbridge, and a family from Nova Scotia. (The ell may have been added to provide an apartment for Elbridge and his first wife). Elbridge remarried and the Nova Scotians left, but the house remained divided until after his father's death in 1867. Elbridge was a very successful business man who owned at least 47 lots or houses in Topsham, Brunswick and Bath. Some time prior to 1880 Elbridge again split the house, this time with his nephew Alvah Hildreth and his wife Annie, who after Elbridge's death in 1884 refinished the diningroom and added the entry and side porches. In turn, when their son Harold matured in the late 1910s he and his wife took up residence in the ell. With the addition of the north ell in the 1860s additional space was provided for the numerous

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boarders and servants that stayed with the families over the years.

Although there is a strong tradition of multi-generational families sharing houses in Maine, it is also true that various devices were utilized to create more or less permanent boundaries between the families: walls were constructed (i.e. the middle back room on the first floor), doors locked in place, and back staircases installed. The last family member to live in the house, Ruth, recalled that when she and Harold went to Sunday dinner at his parents' house they had to knock at the front door and be formally admitted: they never utilized the sliding door between their quarters in the ell and the main house. It appears that at some point the Randall-Hildreth House was divided along the east-west axis. Both the northern and the southern sets of rooms had their own entrances as well as back staircases to the second floor, and after the 1840s, their own kitchen and cellar. A similar arrangement is found in the Isaac Parsons house (1773) in the New Gloucester Historic District, in New Gloucester Maine (NR: 74000164) Although the demographics of its occupants are still vague, this structure has a similar floor plan to the Randall-Hildreth house, complete with three exterior doors. That this house accommodated two distinct families is evident by the two kitchen fireplaces, each with a bake oven, located in the northern rear rooms of the first floor. (A third bake oven is located in the middle back room on the second floor). Conceptually, both of these structures can be seen as mansion houses: they are built not for one generation, but for the long term occupation of the property.

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RANDALL - HILDRETH HOUSE
Name of Property

SAGADAHOC CO., MAINE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 19 428179 4866423
Zone Easting Northing

3 19
Zone Easting Northing

2 19
Zone Easting Northing

4 19
Zone Easting Northing

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 CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 19 May 2004
street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132
city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name
street & number telephone
city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is fully described by the Town of Topsham, Maine property tax map number R 11, lot 026.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property as described by the above cited boundaries contains the all buildings and the remnant farm acreage that is currently associated with the house built by William Randall in 1800.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
5 February 2004
East elevation; facing west.

Photograph 2 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
5 February 2004
Interior, second floor northeast chamber; facing southeast.

Photograph 3 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
5 February 2004
Interior detail, cornice moulding in front hall; facing southeast.

Photograph 4 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
5 February 2004
Interior, grain painting in northwest dining room; facing east.

Photograph 5 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
5 February 2004
Interior, cellar kitchen fireplace; facing southeast.