

JUG 29 1985

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 5 1986

DATE ENTERED APR 28 1987

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Russell/Colbath House

AND/OR COMMON

George House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Kancamagus Highway

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Albany

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF Passaconaway Valley

STATE

New Hampshire

CODE

33

COUNTY

Carroll

CODE

003

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

USDA - USFS Milwaukee

Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

STATE

NA VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Hwy Rte 171

CITY, TOWN

Ossipee

STATE

New Hampshire

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Survey

DATE

October, 1984

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

U.S. Forest Service Supervisor's Office

CITY, TOWN

Laconia

STATE

New Hampshire

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

George House: Description

Present appearance: The George House is a wooden frame dwelling located on the north side of the Kancamagus Highway in the Passaconaway Valley section of the White Mountain National Forest in Albany, New Hampshire. The 1½ story center chimney cape was built by Thomas Russell and his son Amzi in the early 1830's. It was the homestead of Amzi Russell, Albany lumberman, and his descendants until 1930. Today it stands as the only remaining example of the 19th century farmstead occupancy of the Passaconaway Valley. The building is representative of early nineteenth century hill farm cape architecture--in form, slightly taller than the traditional eighteenth century cape, allowing somewhat higher first floor ceilings and second floor bedrooms rather than loft space. In addition, while nineteenth century stylistic trends are in evidence in the house, its structure and interior exhibit simplification of these trends juxtaposed with eighteenth century building techniques and handcrafting which persisted in usage into the nineteenth century in isolated rural hamlets.

Based on an examination of early photographs of the dwelling, the present appearance of the George House is essentially the same as in the past, despite repairs made through time. It presently has unpainted cedar clapboarding (1983) with cornerboards, plain window trim, close eaves, and verges. The roofs are sheathed in wooden shingles (1983). At the time of the 1983 repairs a "time capsule" was found which documented construction and repairs done on the dwelling in 1948, when it was occupied as a summer residence. At that time a small one story bathroom projection was added in the center of the rear (north) facade, covered with a shed roofed extension of the cape's gabled roof. In addition, the original unmortared fieldstone foundation was replaced with concrete, small vents added, and a cement wall with a three pane cellar window was constructed to hold grade in the cellar. Deteriorating sills and windows were also repaired at this time. The center chimney, which is set to the south of the ridge, was repaired and has a concrete cap.

The long south facade of the cape is set facing the road. In the center of the facade is the main entry, a heavy, six panel door with granite step, plain trim, and Norfolk latch. (A small wooden panel with hinges is set into the middle of the door and served as a mail slot when the house was the Passaconaway Post Office in the late 19th century.) The entry is framed by two-thirds side-lights, flanked by simple pilasters with bases and capitals supporting a pseudopedimental entablature. (This is to say, the entablature was given a peak, with cornices on the rakes, but not the horizontal cornice -- Continued on Page 2

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 type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1831; 1850/60; 1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas/Amzi Russell

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual Background

The Passaconaway Valley is located in the northwest section of Albany, New Hampshire in the White Mountain National Forest. Bounded on three sides by mountains, the valley interval is the only section of that part of Albany which could be utilized for agriculture. Settlement of this rather inaccessible part of town was attempted in 1805,¹ abandoned in 1815/17, and renewed again in late 1820's. By the 1830's a hamlet of farmsteads was established along the valley road. Small sawmills were built on valley streams. In winter, timber cut and hauled by oxen to Portland, Maine, provided much needed cash income.²

In the late 19th century, railroads made the Valley accessible to both summer visitors and large timber interests. Farming, ever unreliable as a profitable venture, took second place to logging and development of the Valley as a seasonal resort. Farmhouses became boarding houses or expanded to inns, serving tourists, hunters, fisherman, and loggers. Small parcels from farms began to be sold for hunting camps. By 1890, a few large lumber companies had gained control of timberland associated with valley farms and had absorbed entire farmsteads. From 1900-1916, activity in the Valley was dominated by large scale logging industry, seasonal visitors, and increased numbers of summer cottages and hunting camps. With the establishment of the White Mountain National forest in 1916, the land continued to be used for seasonal recreational purposes and selective timber harvest.³ The Valley as an isolated farming hamlet had become lost in the past.

Architecture

George House is located in the Passaconaway Valley section of the White Mountain National Forest in Albany, New Hampshire. It is the only historic farmstead dwelling remaining in an area which during the nineteenth century supported a hamlet of hill farms and small lumber mills. It is representative of the simple hill farm cape dwellings that once lined the Valley road, away from the mainstream of change. Although the hill farmer was perhaps influenced by stylistic changes that he saw on his occasional trips to more urban areas, ---- Continued on Page 2

¹ U.S. Forest Service Title Abstracts.

² Beals, Charles E. Passaconaway in the White Mountain. 1916. pp.221-225

³ Perry, A. Bernard. Albany's Recollections. p.33-36

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet #9 page 1

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre or less

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 3123510 48739110
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A trapezium encompassing .50 acres. Beginning at a pin on the SE corner at the edge of Kancanagus Highway, Route 112, right of way, the boundary follows the right of way N69 degrees 39'W for 182.12' to a pin N 6 degrees 52'E for 104.20' to a pin S 89 degrees 20'W for 153.95' to a pin, 51 degrees 28'E to the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Justine B. Gengras with original contribution on architecture by David Ruel
 ORGANIZATION DATE

10/29/86

STREET & NUMBER

5 School Lane

TELEPHONE

603-286-8558

CITY OR TOWN

Tilton

STATE

New Hampshire, 03276

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

[Signature]
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

[Signature]

TITLE

AGENCY PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

OCT 30 1986

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/23/87

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/23/87

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to complete the pediment.) This entablature was designed by Clifford Pratt, 1948 local contractor, who noted it was "of his own design" and hoped it lasted as long as the original, "rotten beyond repair". To each side of the entry are two nine over six windows.

The west gable end has four nine over six sash windows in the first story, two six over six windows in the second story, and a plain framed rectangular attic louver in the apex of the gable. The east gable end is similar, except that in the first story there is a six over six window in the northern most bay and a four panel door with granite step and Norfolk latch in the second bay from the north.

In the center of the rear (north facade is the bathroom projection which has a windowless north wall, and a nine pane casement window in both east and west walls. On the cape's north facade to the west of the projection is a double window with nine over six sash, while to the east of the projection is a double window with nine pane casements.

The interior of the house reflects the period of original construction (1831) through 1850/60. The first floor of the house contains four rooms, their position determined, in part by the large center chimney. The main entry opens into a small entry hall south of the chimney. At the front of the house, to the west, is the parlor and to the east, the old kitchen. North of the parlor and the chimney is the first floor bedroom. (Off the bedroom is the projection is the bath room). The northeast corner of the first floor is taken up by two narrow spaces, a small room along the north wall, currently used as a kitchen, and a stair hall. (Directly beneath the stairs to the second floor are the stairs to the cellar.)

The small entry hall has a wide board floor, a plaster ceiling, and plaster walls with board wainscoating having simple baseboards and copings. Simple beveled trim is found around the five pane side-lights and the panels beneath them in the south wall. Beveled trim also surrounds the doors in the side walls -- the five panel west door to the parlor, and the four panel east door to the old kitchen. (When the house served as a local post office, a portion of one kitchen door panel was cut out and replaced by a hinged door above a small shelf, creating an opening through which the mail could be distributed.)

The parlor reflects the 1850/60 "modernization" of the house inspired, according to tradition, by a Russell wife's admiration of a parlor viewed in a

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seacaptain's home. Early details which remain are the painted wide-board floor and a tapered boxed corner post in the southwest corner. The walls are plaster with molded baseboards. The plaster ceiling has been raised and is coved on the east and west sides. In the east wall is a very shallow recess, framed on the sides by boards, which contains the fireplace. The fireplace has a brick hearth, stone jambs and lintel, molded wooden surround with cornerblocks, and a mantleshelf decorated with moldings. Molded trim with cornerblocks also frames the doorways and windows in the room. All doors in the room are five paneled doors, the sides facing into the parlor featuring raised panels without rail and stile molding. The doors have butt hinges with hand-made screw heads and Blake's patent latches.

The old kitchen, like the entry hall, has a painted board floor and plaster walls having similar wide-board wainscoating with simple baseboards and copings. The ceiling has been removed to expose the hewn girts and joists and sawn floorboards of the second floor. The west wall is dominated by a large and wide kitchen fireplace, with a long granite hearth, brick jambs and lintel, and stone backwall. South of the kitchen fireplace proper is a beehive oven whose ornate cast iron door has a plane iron frame. Beneath the oven in the brick facing is a rectangular opening for wood storage. The entire fireplace is framed by a wooden surround with simple moldings, and topped with a shallow high mantleshelf, also with simple moldings. South of the fireplace is the four panel door to the entry hall, while north of it is the four panel door to the first floor bedroom, both doors having molded trim. In the north wall are three five panel doors with molded trim. The east door opens into the stairhall. The center door serves a shallow kitchen closet with built in shelves, board floor, walls and ceiling. The west door opens into the cellar landing.

The cellar landing has a board floor and small plaster ceiling. Narrow shelves of thin hand-planed boards extend to the ceiling to the right of the landing door. The walls of the landing and stairwell are sheathed with vertical hand-planed boards. The wooden stairs with hewn handrail lead to the unfinished cellar. Only the section beneath the old kitchen is excavated, the remainder being a crawlspace. The floor is dirt, save for a concreted section in the northeast corner. The ceiling is unfinished with exposed hewn beams, some of them supported by concrete block piers. The west wall of the cellar is dominated by the massive unmortared, undressed fieldstone base of the center chimney.

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Early details are present in the walls of the first floor bedroom, three of which retain handplaned vertical wideboard sheathing with baseboards. The fourth, north wall and the small corner between the parlor door and the rear wall of the parlor closet (which projects into the bedroom) are plastered with baseboards. A boxed post projects from the north wall.

The narrow new kitchen has a linoleum floor and vertical board walls topped by quarter round molding. The girts and joists of the second floor, which have been exposed around the entire room, frame a composition board ceiling with ceiling molding and strapping. A six panel door with raised panels, plain frame, and latch is in the north wall. (This door provided access to sheds attached to the north of the house, removed in 1935, and has been completely covered by new clapboarding on the exterior.)

The stairhall, between the old and new kitchens, consists of a small landing at the side door, with the enclosed stairwell to its west. Save for the east wall which has exposed studding and horizontal boarding, the walls are sheathed with vertical hand-planed boarding. The floor and steps are of boards but the ceiling is unfinished, with the beams and floorboards of the second floor exposed. The landing is served by the outer four panel door, the four panel old kitchen door, and the five panel new kitchen door. The first two doors have plain frames, while the last has a simple beveled frame.

The stairs lead up to an L-shaped corridor, the short section west of the center chimney serving two small bedrooms at the west end and an attic storage area in the center. The long corridor along the north wall of the house ends at the entrance of a larger bedroom east of the center chimney. The second floor bedrooms have plaster walls and ceilings with molded baseboards and board floors. The southeast bedroom has a raised floor to accommodate the coved parlor ceiling (as does the section of corridor immediate to it). The gable end walls of the bedrooms have shallow short horizontal wooden "boxes" enclosing the gable end plates. The walls and partially slanted ceiling of the corridor are sheathed with composition board, divided into panels by strapping and trimmed with baseboards and ceiling molding. Plain trim surrounds all second floor windows and doors.

Construction details of the house such as the split-board laths, pegged beams, and center chimney details, can be viewed in the unfinished attic storage area and in the unfinished storage space in the north and south eaves (accessed by short raised paneled doors in corridor and east bedroom).

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Very few modern improvements have been made to George House. All doors feature latches. Electricity is minimal. (Water is pumped to the house via an external generator.) The only source of heat is from fireplaces. During its period of use as a summer residence (1932-1961), the dilapidated outbuildings attached to the rear of the dwelling were dismantled and removed, as was the large barn which was located to the west of the dwelling. A one story, painted, clap-boarded two car garage was built to the east of the dwelling. The bathroom extension at the rear of the house and water into the house were added in 1948.

Since the U.S. Forest Service acquired the property in 1961, George House has served as Visitor Information Center for the section of the White Mountain National Forest along the Kancamagus Highway during the summer season. The first floor of the dwelling is open to the public; furnishings in the bedroom and parlow reflect the Victorian period of Russell/Colbath occupancy. When weather permits, the beehive oven is used to demonstrate bread making. Other colonial crafts are demonstrated in the old kitchen. Artifacts and memorabilia associated with the dwelling and Valley are displayed for public viewing in the old kitchen.

The front of the house is landscaped with flower beds and an herb garden. A well with fieldstone curbing is located in front of the house. The remainder of the grounds surrounding the house is maintained in lawn with occasional trees.

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RUSSELL/COLBATH HOUSE

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ALTERATIONS: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 1986, Ann Croto removed the pressed boards from the ceiling of the bedroom area in the back of the house. It was obvious that the ceiling had been added in the 1930's or 40's and was destroying the integrity of that room. In the time of Ruth Colbath the ceiling had not been boarded. The stringers are now exposed just as they were when Ruth was alive.

In 1983, the Saco District contracted with a local carpenter to have the rotting, peeling clapboards removed from the George House and replaced with quality clapboards. In addition to replacing the clapboards the door frames and window frames were also replaced. When the doorframe was removed from the front door a quart jar was recovered from a dead space beside the door. In the jar was a detailed description of what had been done to the house in 1948. Clifford Pratt, contractor, had written a description of the work done and also made some rather testy remarks about the state of the Union in general.

A copy of the entire letter from Clifford Pratt follows:

Aug. 18, 1948

THE OUTSIDE OF THIS HOUSE AND THE BATHROOM ADDITION, HAS BEEN DONE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF CLIFFORD E. PRATT, who is living in a log cabin by the Olvarian (Oliverian) Brook.

The roster of my crew is as follows: Arndt Von Hippel. A German boy sixteen years old. Son of Arthur Von Hippel a Prof at Mass. Tech-Colledge (sic) (atomic energy man) The kid is a very able carpenteer. Benson Howard of Bartlett NH, seventeen years old (Cracker Jack workman) Robert V. Beals, forty two years old (Veteran of World War two) GI Bill of rights apprentice (sic) to CE Pratt for four years. Stephen A. Lane (Fifty three) Born in this valley and a veteran of World War I.

I was born in Winchester Mass in Aug 1890 and came to Laconia NH in Jan. 1907 and learned the car building trade in the Laconia Car Co Works. Served time as a ship carpenter at Essex, Mass on Wooden Fishing Schooners. Was night forman (sic) in charge of night crew LH Shattuck Emergency Fleet Corp at Dover NH. During World war I we built 18 - 3500 ton wooden freightors (sic).

I came in to Passaconaway (sic) Valley in 1907 Nov. 3rd deer hunting. I have hunted here every year since and have killed a great many deer and five black bear. My Wife Mabel and I have made a permanent home here since 1934 and we both hope that we can enjoy our old age and die here near to Gods best work and beauty.

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Mrs. Ruth P. Colbath was born and died in this house. Born in 1850 and died in Nov 1930. I was very fond of the old lady. I am not sure but think she told me that her father Amzie Russel built this house or her grandfather (maternal) built it and that here (sic) father bought it from him. Ruth married a Thomas Colbath and together they bought the farm from her mother.

The House and 16 acres now belong to Harold Conklin and his wife Mariam who live at Lowell, Mass. and purchased the place from the Administrator in 1931. (caps mine to draw attention to remodelling) THE HOUSE WAS RESILLED IN 1932 BY FRANCIS DOW OF CONWAY WHO DID A VERY POOR JOB.

WE HAVE AT THIS OVERHAUL PUT IN NEW SILLS IN SECTIONS, WALL TO HOLD GRADE IN CELLAR, WINDOW IN CELLAR, CEMENT FLOOR, WATER TO TANK IN CELLAR FROM WELL IN YARD, ALL THE BATHROOM PLUMBING, ALL NEW WINDOW SILLS AND CASINGS, DOUBLE BOARDED THE WALLS OVER THE OLD SIDING WITH WATERPROOF PAPER BETWEEN BOARDING. THREE THICKNESSES OF PAPER UNDER CLAPBOARDS BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ANY GOOD RIFE CLAPBOARDS, CLAPBOARDS ARE ALL RESAWED AND ARE NOT FEATHER EDGED SO THEY CRACK AND SPLIT VERY EASY.

THIS COLONIAL FRONT DOOR FRAME IS MY OWN DESIGN AND I HOPE IT LASTS AS LONG AS THE ORIGINAL ONE WHICH I HAVE JUST TAKEN OUT BECAUSE IT WAS ROTTEN BEYOND REPAIR.

These remarks of mine are being placed in a glass jar in the top of this doorway and under something causes the house to burn they may lay here for a great many years and I may be over in the little yard cross the way (cemetery) before they are found but it is possible they may be of interest when found.

The old U.S.A. is in bad shape right now. We have lived thro (sic) 16 year of F.D. Roosevelt's lieing (sic) crooked administratration and at his death have almost gone to hell thro the efforts of the dubbing little fool Harry Truman (God what a light weight).

We live in hopes that Thomas E. Dewey the Presidential candidate this Nov will be able when elected to once more give us an honest deal again, he is the only man that can do it.

Good Luck to the world
Clifford E. Pratt

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he was still dependent upon his own limited technology to achieve them. Hence George House remains as an example of the use and persistence in the nineteenth century of hand crafting and building techniques that had been discarded in urban New England areas.

Much of the interior of George House today is as it was prior to 1860 and reflects the simple and unadorned lifestyle of the hill farmer/lumberman. Within the rooms of the little cape can be seen its owner's dependency upon his own talent and ingenuity to create a home using primarily the raw materials close at hand.

Settlement/Industry

From the time it was built in 1831, George House has always been associated with the changing use of the valley lands -- from pioneer settlement, to farming and lumbering, to seasonal recreational use.

George House was the homestead of Amzi Russell, one of the first permanent settlers in the Valley. Russell (1810-1877) was a pioneer in the N.H. lumber and logging industry. In 1832, he purchased the farm from his⁴ father, Thomas, who had acquired the parcel at a tax auction the previous year⁴. Within the next few years, he had established a sawmill on the nearby Oliverian Brook⁵ and married Eliza George, granddaughter of Austin George. (This close association with the George family, coupled with the fact that the pioneer homestead site of Austin George was located a few hundred feet from the Russell dwelling, caused the Russell house to become known locally as "George House", a misnomer.) The Russell sawmill prospered. It reported a capital investment of \$4000 and was producing 250,000⁶ feet of sawed lumber annually as well as clapboards and shingles in 1850.

In 1857, Amzi Russell contracted with the town of Albany to build a bridge across the Swift River. The first attempt, built by Russell and his brother, Thomas, became detached from one riverbank during high winds and washed downstream. Russell, with the help of Leander Moulton of Conway, disassembled the bridge and rebuilt it.⁷ This covered bridge across the Swift River still stands today.

⁴ U.S. Forest Service Abstracts.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Census of 1850

⁷ Perry, p.66

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It is assumed that the Russell sawmill burned prior to 1860, as it does not report in the 1860 U.S. Census (and title shows no evidence of the privilege being sold.) By this time, Russell's interests had turned to logging. He owned the largest holding in Albany, 5000 acres of timber land.⁸ By 1870, apparently in anticipation of logging railroads to serve the area, he had acquired a large portion of the timber land in Albany, 13,000 acres -- valuation, \$18,000.⁹ He died in 1877, his estate heavily mortgaged, before the railroads became a reality. The timber interests were sold to investors from Massachusetts to save the homefarm parcel for his widow.¹⁰

George House continued to be operated as a modest farm after Russell's death by Russell's youngest daughter, Ruth (1850-1930), her husband, Thomas Colbath, and Russell's widow, Eliza.¹¹ In 1891, Thomas Colbath abandoned his wife¹², but she and her mother continued to live at the farm. The valley was then experiencing popularity as a vacation spot for summer tourists. In 1892, in response to the increased summer population, George House was designated Passaconaway Post Office, with Ruth Colbath serving as postmistress from 1892-1907.¹³

Ruth Colbath continued to live in George House alone after her mother's death in 1909, steadfastly refusing to sell or leave the farm. She supported herself by selling small portions of the homefarm for hunting and summer camps. In time she became somewhat of a local legend, known as "the hermit lady of the Valley", who maintained a lamp in the window in the hope her husband would someday return. Year after year she maintained a solitary existence from November to May, her only human contact, her "handyman", Ben Swinnerton, who lived in a camp a mile away. During the summers, she enthralled tourists and reporters with her reminiscences of early days in the Valley.¹⁴ After her death in 1930 at 80 years old, George House was used as a summer home.

⁸ U.S. Census of 1860.

⁹ U.S. Census of 1870.

¹⁰ U.S. Forest Service Title Abstract.

¹¹ U.S. Agricultural Census of 1880.

¹² Perry. p. 67

¹³ The Mountain Ear (North Conway, NH) Newspaper) "The Lamp in th Window". July 20, 1984

¹⁴ Boston Herald. (new Item. 1930?) "Woman of 80 is "Winter Hermit" of Passaconaway".
Compiled in Elaine Wales' scrapbook of Albany.

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(Note: Most of the records for the Town of Albany, New Hampshire were
destroyed in a fire in 1882.)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

RUSSELL/COLBATH HOUSE

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries for the land surrounding the house were chosen to include the areas where the two barns were historically located, and to include the area between the house and the roadway that had historically been the dooryard. The boundary encompasses all extant structures and provides sufficient setting for the house, as well as having a historic basis.

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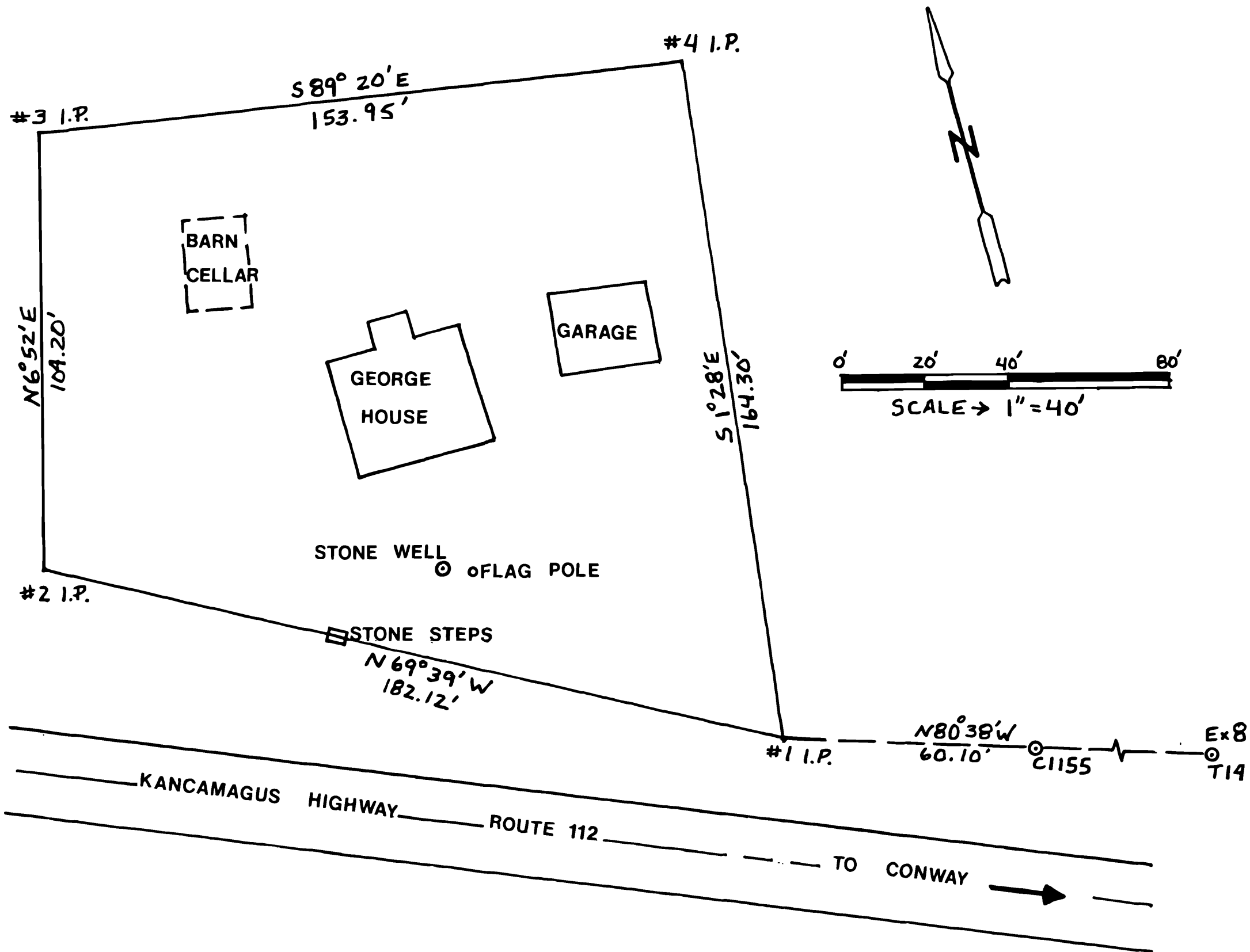
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