

Peter N. Kyros

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Lincoln
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Thompson Ice House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: South Bristol

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1st

STATE: Maine

CODE: 23

COUNTY: Lincoln

CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Herbert Thompson

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: South Bristol

STATE: Maine

CODE: 23



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Lincoln County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Wiscasset

STATE: Maine

CODE: 23

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine	COUNTY: Lincoln	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY			DEC 31 1974

**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thompson Ice House is Maine's last commercial ice house. Located on a pond in South Bristol, this structure stands on a site occupied by ice houses since 1826. Although of undetermined date, the present building is apparently of nineteenth century origin.

The main section of the Thompson Ice House is a large rectangular structure which has frame construction and a gable roof. This central section is flanked on either side by a frame lean-to structure. The lean-to on the south wall covers only half of the length of the main section, while the northern lean-to extends the entire length. That portion of the southern wall not covered by the lean-to is reinforced by a series of poles, which act as buttresses. The exterior of the ice house is covered with unpainted pine boards. The building is studded to leave a nine inch space between the inner and outer walls, which is packed with sawdust for insulation. The interior is entirely open to allow for the storage of ice.

The east and west walls of the Thompson Ice House contain the openings for storing and removing the ice. The east wall faces the pond from which the ice is harvested. This wall has an elongated vertical doorway in the central section through which the ice is transferred for storage. The ice cakes are floated through a channel of open water to a wooden ramp where a truck powered conveyor belt moves them into the storage area. The vertical doorway is elongated in order to place the layers of ice to the top of the building.

The ice house contains a similar elongated vertical doorway in the central section of the west wall. Covered by three doors, this arrangement allows for the removal of ice at different levels. Directly below these doors is a simple wooden ramp used in transferring the ice to the trucks. Another door is found on the west wall of the north lean-to.

The lakes and rivers of nineteenth century Maine were dotted with large wooden ice houses. Now only the Thompson Ice House at South Bristol remains. While the building has been affectionately described as "a weatherbeaten, drunken sailor sort of a barn," it is a rare landmark of a virtually vanished American industry.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Thompson Ice House is the location of the last commercial natural ice business in Maine. As a symbol of what was for many years an important industry in the state, it is therefore of considerable significance. Of added interest is the fact that this location was also one of the earliest to produce ice for shipment outside the state, the first ice being cut there in 1826 and "sold south" for \$700.

In general before the 1830's Boston supplied the small amounts of ice needed to fill the demand in the southern states and the Caribbean area. Most of the ice from Maine in the early years was shipped in vessels that happened to be icebound in the Kennebec River. By the middle of the century, the ice business was flourishing in the Kennebec area and larger ice houses were built with added mechanization including endless chains for loading and tools designed specifically for ice cutting.

Between 1881 and 1890, the total Maine ice harvest increased from 971,000 tons to 3,092,400 tons but after 1890 production leveled off and eventually began to decline as artificially manufactured ice and new methods of refrigeration began to impinge.

The Thompson Ice House is operated by Herbert Thompson, a direct descendent of Melvin Thompson, the original proprietor. Mr. Thompson remembers as a boy that all the cutting and storage was done by hand. Now machines are used for both operations.

The ice is usually harvested in January when it has reached a thickness of twelve inches. First, a groove is marked out the length of the pond with a straight edge. A second line is grooved at right angles to it and from these guides, the entire surface is marked off into 22" X 30" cakes. A power saw cuts to within two inches of the bottom after which the cakes are easily split off with a two-tined iron tool called a needle bar. The cakes are floated through a channel of open water to the ice house ramp where a truck powered conveyor belt moves them up into the storage area.

The ice house is studded to leave a nine inch space between inner and outer walls which is packed with sawdust for insulation. When the

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Down East Magazine, March, 1967, p.34  
Annual Report Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1891, p. 161

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43 ° 52 ' 43 "	69 ° 33 ' 40 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

19/4/1960  
4209320

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3 Acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr, Architectural Historian**  
**Frank A. Beard, Historic Preservationist**

ORGANIZATION: **Maine Historic Preservation Commission** DATE: **10/23/74**

STREET AND NUMBER: **31 Western Ave.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Augusta** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: James H. Mundy  
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer  
 Date: November 4, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AK Worlews  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: DEC 31 1974

ATTEST: Arty George F. Emery  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 31 1974

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
COUNTY Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries)

8. Significance

1.

harvest is completed, the ice is protected on top with a foot thick layer of marsh hay. The usual harvest consists of about 6,000 cakes weighing 250 pounds apiece.

Mr. Thompson claims there is still a great demand for his natural ice and he intends to continue production in the tradition of the once great industry to which this structure stands as a monument.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maine	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries)

7. Description

Note:

The ice pond consisting of approximately 2½ acres is included in this nomination and is within the 3 acres indicated under category # 10.

