

PH0663263

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | | DATA SHEET |
| RECEIVED | FEB 15 1978 | |
| DATE ENTERED | JUL 12 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 Capt. James Morison House

AND/OR COMMON Chellis House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER South Road *SE of Parsonsfield*

CITY, TOWN Parsonsfield *vic* VICINITY OF 1st CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Maine CODE 23 COUNTY York CODE 031 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Edward H. Stann

STREET & NUMBER 220 Hillside Avenue

CITY, TOWN Chatham VICINITY OF STATE New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. York County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER CITY, TOWN Alfred, STATE Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE DATE FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Capt. James Morison House of Parsonsfield, built about 1785 with a slightly earlier ell, is a large and well-preserved example of a late colonial rural residence of inland Maine. It is comprised of a range of attached structures oriented north-west to south-east, the facade facing south-west. These structures consist of the main part of the house, the ell, a barn, and a large shed. All of these components are of frame construction on granite foundation with gable roofs.

The main part of the house lies at the south-eastern end of the complex and consists of a 2½ story clapboarded dwelling with two internal brick end chimneys. The 2-story facade is five bays wide with a central entrance beneath a bracketed hood of mid-19th-century date. The windows are 2/2, the 18th-century sash having been replaced in the mid-19th-century. The end of the house is of 2½ stories and is two bays wide. Here also the windows are 2/2, except in the half story where there is a single 6/6. The gable-end is pedimented, a later feature in Greek Revival taste. The rear of the house was once five bays wide with a central entrance; this doorway has been eliminated. There are four windows in the first story and two in the second.

The clapboarded ell is of two stories with a central brick chimney and is four bays long. Its first-story windows are 2/2 while those above are 6/6. A recent modification is a recessed first-story entrance and windows across half of the facade.

The barn carries board and batten siding and features a rear entrance, facing north-east. The south-west facade contains two large 6/6 windows above a single 2/2.

The shed is the north-westernmost element. It too has board and batten siding.

The interior of the main part of the Morison House is well-preserved, based on the colonial center-hall plan. Woodwork throughout is graceful. The stairway is completely intact with delicately carved balusters. The entire stairwell and first and second-floor walls of the hall are decorated by murals signed by J.D. Poor. These are remarkable in their preservation.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

circa 1785

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Capt. James Morison House derives significance from three areas: as a good example of a late colonial inland residence in rural Maine (see Description, Item 7), as a home built by a Revolutionary soldier of some distinction, and because it contains unusually well preserved murals by Jonathan D. Poor.

The area now comprising the town of Parsonsfield was originally part of a twenty mile square piece of land purchased in 1668 by Francis Small, an Indian trader, from the sagamore, Captain Sunday, of Newickawannock. Title to this land was later confirmed by the General Court of Massachusetts. Small sold an undivided interest to Major Nicholas Shapleigh of Kittery and transferred his remaining interest to his son, Samuel in 1711. The descendants of the two proprietors partitioned this land in 1771 and that part which is now Parsonsfield was conveyed to Thomas Parsons and 39 associates.

Settlement was at first slow but by 1785, at the time of incorporation, 62 names appeared on the tax list, all but eleven of whom had moved to the area since 1780. One of the recent arrivals was Captain James Morison, originally of Nottingham, New Hampshire.

Morison was of Scotch-Irish descent, his grandfather having been born in Scotland in the 1680's, his father in Ireland in 1725 and he in Nottingham in 1754. A member of one of the first units to assemble for the siege of Boston, he fought at Bunker Hill and moved with the army to New York. Rising to a captaincy he was chosen to serve on the personal body-guard of the later disgraced Gen. Charles Lee in which capacity he participated in the New Jersey campaign of 1776. He was recognized for exceptional service at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777 where he was wounded and mustered out of the army.

Like many another Revolutionary veteran he sought land in the newly opening townships in Maine and moved to Parsonsfield in the early 1780's where he built the house on South Road. He occupied this home with his wife and family until his death in 1840. Descendants of his still reside in the town. A colorful character, he was once asked by a local minister if he feared death to which he replied, "Afraid! I afraid! Why, sir, I was at Bunker Hill, Brandywine and through the Jersey's".

Upon his death the house was acquired by Seth Chellis who developed the property into "one of the largest and most productive farms in town". It is to be assumed that at the time he purchased the house the Greek Revival elements were added and the magnificent murals signed by Jonathan D. Poor painted on the walls of the front stairway and upper and lower halls.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dearborn, J.W., A History of the First Century of the Town of Parsonfield, Maine
Portland, 1888.

Lipman, Jean, Rufus Porter, Yankee Pioneer. New York, 1968

Clayton, W.W., History of York County, Maine. Philadelphia, 1880

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 1 9 | 3 4 8 8 5 0 | 4 8 3 9 0 1 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Frank A. Beard, Historian
Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

January, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

242 State Street

TELEPHONE

(207)-289-2133

CITY OR TOWN

Augusta

STATE

Maine

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

Earle S. Fretwell

TITLE

S.H.P.O.

DATE

2/9/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. M. [Signature]

DATE

7-12-78

ATTEST:

W. M. Cole

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

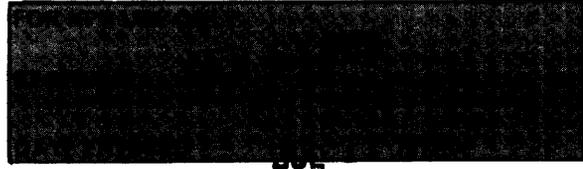
DATE

6-29-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Poor was a nephew and gifted pupil of the noted painter, decorator and inventor, Rufus Porter, whose mural and stencil work is well known in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Born in 1807, Poor was the most productive member of Porter's school of mural painters and in 1823 began his itinerant wanderings as an apprentice-assistant to his uncle. His early death in 1845 terminated a most promising career.