

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 19 1979

DEC 27 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME** *Wells Township Cape Cod Houses Thematic Resources*

HISTORIC

Early Wells Capes (before 1800)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

--NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Wells vicinity and environs
VICINITY OF

CODE

023

First

COUNTY

York

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT☒ *Thematic*
Group

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 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.*York County Registry of Deeds*

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

*Alfred,**Maine***6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Wells Historic Preservation Committee Survey

DATE

1978☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS*Wells Municipal Building*

CITY, TOWN

STATE

*Rt. 1; Wells,**Maine*

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The nineteen structures included in this thematic group nomination are all so-called Cape Cod houses built before 1800 in the town of Wells, Maine.

Wells, during the early development and today, with the exception of a coastal strip along the beach and U. S. Route 1, is an essentially rural area with low population density. During the 18th and 19th centuries much of the region was cleared for agricultural purposes but today the interior has become reforested with second and third growths over a large portion.

The properties included in this nomination, as the title implies, are one-and-a-half story dwellings with single gable roofs. Most are five bays wide with a central entrance on the main facade which is on one of the sides parallel with the gable. Commonly they also feature a single central chimney. Typically they are low posted as compared with 19th century Capes and tend to have rather smaller windows than their later descendants. Frequently doors and windows are tucked snugly under the eaves of the roof.

Built as dwellings for varying sizes of families in a subsistence farm milieu, these properties range from relatively small, one room deep cottages with fairly steeply pitched roofs to broad rangy, often nearly square houses with expansive more gently sloping roof lines. More often than not ells and attached sheds are also present as contemporary or later additions.

In their variations these Wells Capes exemplify the humbler dwellings typical of rural Maine in the 18th century. For reasons discussed under Item 8 (Significance) Wells possesses a greater concentration of this type of property than any other easily definable area in Maine.

The development of the list of properties selected for this nomination came about as a result of a general survey of historic properties conducted by the Wells Historic Preservation Committee, a duly authorized agency of the Town of Wells. Survey leaders were Eugenie Sotiropoulos-Foss and Hope Shelley both of whom are residents of the area, familiar with its history and trained in deed research. They were assisted in technical aspects of the project by Frank A. Beard, Historian of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The survey included a road by road examination of the entire area of the town covering about 50 square miles. The 19 properties selected were chosen after visual examination of more than 60 Capes and study of photographs. The examples chosen were those deemed to have retained their original features with fewest changes and alterations. The most common reasons for exclusion were added dormers, changes in fenestration, and movement or addition of chimnies. Consideration was also given to the nature of accompanying structures, particularly if attached.

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Among the communities first established in what is now the State of Maine, Wells, settled in the 1640's, alone lacked a harbor, river mouth or other shelter suitable for extensive maritime activity. Kittery and York to the south, and Cape Porpus to the north were all amply supplied with such geographical features. As a result, settlement and economic development in these towns was oriented toward the sea in the form of fishing and later shipping and shipbuilding. Wells, on the other hand, with little but an exposed beach along virtually the entire coast line, became an almost entirely agricultural settlement made up of small farms. While her neighbors developed a certain prosperity in the 17th and 18th centuries which was reflected in the development of town centers with some large and impressive houses, Wells remained a dispersed community of small dwellings, largely Capes.

During the worst of the Colonial conflicts at the turn of the 18th century, Wells was one of only two or three communities to avoid complete depopulation, but so great was the devastation that there are no structures which can be definitely dated earlier than c.1710. This is true also of the rest of southern Maine.

Throughout the 18th century Wells continued as an almost purely agricultural area with relatively small landholdings and, as a result, a larger proportion of humbler dwellings, mostly Capes. Thus, because of its early date of settlement and its geography, Wells is possessed of a concentration these "houses that built America" - and Maine for that matter - unmatched elsewhere in the state in number and age.

It is hoped that on the basis of this nomination, research can be developed leading to a definitive analysis of the early Cape in Maine both architecturally and as it relates to economic and sociological factors in 18th century settlement patterns.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bacon, Richard M., The House That Built America. Yankee Magazine, December, 1977

Connally, Ernest Allen, The Cape Cod House. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XIX, No. 2. May, 1960.

Doane, Doris, A Book of Cape Cod Houses. New York, 1970.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY See inventory sheets

UTM NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Kennebunk

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A							
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					
C							
E							
G							

B							
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					
D							
F							
H							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See inventory Sheets

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

ORGANIZATION

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

July, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

242 State Street

TELEPHONE

207/289-2133

CITY OR TOWN

Augusta,

STATE

Maine 04333

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

E. S. Felt

TITLE

S.H.P.O.

DATE

9/5/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/27/79

ATTEST

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12/11/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Bourne, E. E., History of Wells and Kennebunk. Portland, 1875.

Perkins, E. G., Wells: The Frontier Town of Maine. 2 vols.
Ogunquit, 1970-71.