

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Maine</b>
COUNTY: <b>Knox</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <b>JUL 1 2 1974</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Norumbega**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**High Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Camden**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**1st: Hon. Peter Kyros**

STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23** COUNTY: **Knox** CODE: **013**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Earle C. & Mary V. Pitman**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**High Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Camden**

STATE:  
**Maine**

CODE:  
**23**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Knox County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Rockland**

STATE:  
**Maine**

CODE:  
**23**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None**

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State

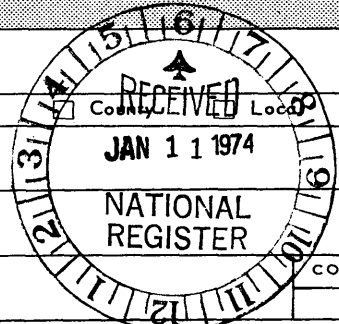
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

JUL 1 2 1974

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input 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

Norumbega in Camden is one of the great late nineteenth century villas of the Maine coast. Erected by Joseph B. Stearns at a cost of \$100,000, it was built between 1886 and 1887 from plans by G. B. Jennings, a New York architect. A Mr. Bowditch of Boston served as the landscape architect, and David B. Withington of Camden was employed as the contractor and builder.

Norumbega was designed in the popular Queen Ann style of the 1880's with its emphasis on picturesque effect and varied surface treatments. The house is basically rectangular and has walls of roughly faced cobble stones with brick and wooden trim. There are also elements which are predominantly of wooden frame construction. The principal facade faces west toward the main highway of Route One. The facade is composed of three sections. The central section rises three stories high. On the first story is an elaborate portico with a cobble stone base. The portico is enclosed by five clear glass bays on the front and three glass bays on either side. The middle three bays on the front are doors. Above all the bays are stained glass panels. The gabled roof of the portico is supported on either side at the front by a square brick pier. The front of this roof has a shingled triangular pediment with a clear glass fan in the center. The walls of the second and third stories are of cobblestone construction with brick trim around the two arched windows on each of the second and third stories as well as on the stepped gable at the top. To the left of the stepped gable is a brick chimney.

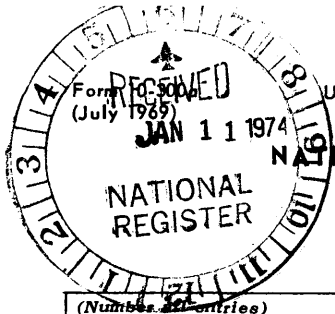
To the left of Norumbega's central facade is a two story gable roofed section with cobblestone base and wooden construction. The first story is devoted to an open porte-cochere, while the second story is an enclosed part of the main house. The facade of this second story has two windows and is treated with varied patterns of shingles.

To the right of the villa's central facade is a three-storied section. Two arched cellar windows and two arched first story windows are surrounded with brick trim and set into a cobblestone wall. Between the two first story windows is a semi-detached granite column which forms the lower portion of a large two story wooden turret. Each level of the turret has a series of five windows. Between the two levels of windows is a band of ornamental rosettes which alternate in size. The turret is topped with conical roof with a decorative slate pattern and crowned with a metal finial.

The right or south wall of Norumbega is as picturesque as the facade. A large shingled wooden veranda extends across the side of the first story. It has a cobblestone base and both enclosed and open sections. The south wall is of cobblestone construction. The second story contains two arched windows with brick trim. The story has a decorative combination of elements. At the left is a window with a shingled triangular pediment over it supported by a pair of shingled brackets. The roofline above it is slanted and runs to a large rectangular brick chimney ornamented with an inset terra cotta panel. At the right is large loggia with a shingled wooden balcony

( See Continuation Sheet )

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUL 12 1974

(Number of entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

and a large brick arch. Above the arch there is a stepped gable roofline.

The shingled wooden veranda with its cobblestone base extends around the east side of Norumbega. The second and third stories continue the cobblestone treatment. On each story, several windows with brick trim, take advantage of the superb view of Camden harbor.

The elegant interior has changed little since the following description appeared in the Industrial Journal of Bangor on October 22, 1886:

"The basement, which is large and roomy, contains engine and furnace room, kitchen, laundry, servants-room, workshop, lock-up, billiard-room, and a coal-room capable of holding one hundred tons of coal. On the first floor is the reception-room, library, sitting-room or parlor, dining-room with pantry adjoining, and conservatory, which latter connects with the library by a wide piazza running the length of the southerly and westerly sides of the building. The hallway is large, with a dias or platform landing for the stairs, and an open fireplace in the corner. On the second and third floors will be the rooms for the members of the family, and guest rooms, all furnished by Mr. Chas. L. Bly, of 37 Pearl Street, Boston, with electric lights and electric bells; water to be throughout the house, with bath-room on the second floor. The attic will be divided into three large rooms, with dormer windows. In one of these rooms, which will include the interior of the conical shaped tower, or turret, Mr. Stearns will sleep during rainy nights, "to the music of the rain-drops."

Many of these rooms open on balconies, or have bay windows, and from all of them beautiful views of mountain, bay, harbor, island and ocean may be enjoyed. Mrs. Stearns' room is on the second floor and will be supplied with all the conveniences of a city-built house, including electric bells and lights, and speaking-tubes communicating with kitchen, hallway and dining-room. Mr. Stearns' office or "growlery," as he terms it, is entered by steps from the second floor, and is situated outside of the main easterly wall and directly over the port cochere, and bountifully supplied with light from three sides. The halls will be heated from steam-radiators, and the rooms heated and ventilated by open fire-places."

Both the exterior and the interior of Norumbega have survived in an excellent state of preservation. They create the picturesque elegance for which the grand coastal villas of the late nineteenth century strove.

**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) **1886-87**

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/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry             | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature           | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Joseph B. Stearns was born in 1831 in the town of Weld, Franklin County, Maine. The story of Stearns life reads like a Horatio Alger book that was never written.

After several early failures which left him deeply in debt, Stearns went into a telegraph office in Newburyport, Massachusetts in 1850. Four years later in 1854, Stearns became the superintendent of the Boston Fire Alarm Telegraph office, a post which he held for 12 years.

In 1867 he was elected president of the Franklin Telegraph Company, operating between Boston and Washington, a post which he held for two and one-half years. It was during this short tenure of office that Mr. Stearns invented the duplex system of telegraphy, by which two messages could be sent over the same wire at the same time. This invention revolutionized the telegraph industry and eventually made Mr. Stearns a millionaire.

Between 1869 and 1885, Mr. Stearns introduced his invention to Europe, Canada and South America. For his efforts he continued to receive royalties from England, France and Italy.

In 1885 Joseph B. Stearns ended his active career and returned to Maine. It was at this time that he built his great stone villa at Camden. The surrounding land, Stearns stocked with valuable herds of cattle and completed his dream home in 1891 by building an astronomical observatory about twenty rods from his villa.

The building of "Norumbega" in Camden in 1885 completed a cycle which was increasingly becoming more frequent in late nineteenth-century Maine. Stearns had left Maine to make his fortune and having succeeded in that endeavor, returned upon retirement to enjoy its benefits in a baronial estate on the Maine Coast.

By the mid 1880's, Bar Harbor, with its grand vistas and Camden with its beautiful rustic harbor and fine yacht basin were becoming the frontier "Newports" for the leisure class. The Camden of today retains this same flavor as one of the leading summer resorts of coastal Maine. "Norumbega" with its fine architecture and outstanding location remains as one of Maine's outstanding example of the great cottage villas which dotted the Maine Coast in the heyday of the Victorian leisure class.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Industrial Journal, Bangor, Maine, October 22, 1886.

The Industrial Journal, Bangor, Maine, July 12, 1895.

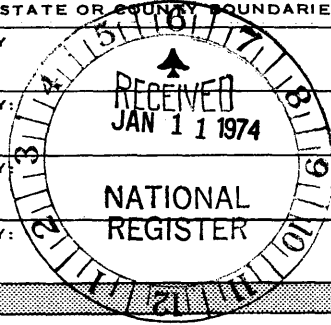
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	° ' "	° ' "		44° 13' 04"	69° 03' 26"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: December, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 January 7, 1974

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

A. F. Mortensen  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/12/74

ATTEST:  
Ronald M. Greenberg  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 7-12-74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS