

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 17 1975
DATE ENTERED SEP 9 1975

**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

Kennebunk River Club

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Ocean Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kennebunkport

VICINITY OF

First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

York

CODE

031

3 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
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: recreational

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Kennebunk River Club

STREET & NUMBER

Ocean Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Kennebunkport

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

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

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1965

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D. C.

STATE

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 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 Kennebunk River Club of 1888-89 is a handsome example of the Shingle Style architecture which became popular for recreational buildings and summer cottages in the late 19th century. Although the architect is as yet undiscovered, his bold use of the all encompassing gable roof form reflects his awareness of the most advanced design thinking of the period.

Sited directly on the Kennebunk River, the River Club is located a quarter of a mile from the ocean. The building is rectangular in shape, measures 63 feet by 98 feet, stands two stories high, and has a large gable roof with a small intersecting cross gable on each of the north and south walls. The one story, flat roofed, rectangular canoe house which extends the length of the south wall, is a 1908 addition. The entire structure is supported by diagonally braced wooden pilings and is of frame construction covered with horizontal lapped courses of wooden shingles which have weathered to a greyish brown.

The principal elevation of the River Club faces west onto the Kennebunk River. This river facade presents a highly symmetrical composition of elements. At the center of the first story is a pair of doors which is flanked by sidelights. On either side of this doorway are two symmetrically placed windows. The first story is fronted by a porch with five arched openings on the facade and one on the north wall. The central facade and north wall openings are equipped with staircases for access to and from the porch. The remaining four facade openings have railings with inverted arches decorated by spindles.

A double door with sidelights is repeated at the center of the second story facade. This doorway is flanked on either side by a symmetrically placed window. The second story facade is fronted by a large arched porch. Since its removal in this century, the second story porch has been enclosed by a simple railing. The facade design is completed by the all encompassing gable roofline that has a triangular projection at the peak, below which are four louvered panels.

The three remaining walls of the River Club are somewhat more simply articulated. The east or street side contains another pair of doors with sidelights at the center of the first story. In front of this entrance is a portico composed of three arches on the front and one on each of the two sides. Two windows are symmetrically located on either side of the portico.

The portico roof forms a small second story balcony which is reached by a door, again with sidelights. At either side of this doorway is a pair of symmetrically placed windows. The gable roofline is repeated, featuring a small three part window just below the peak of the gable.

The north wall of the River Club displays two three sided bay windows on the first story. Between these on the second story is a small cross gable with two windows on its north side and a stone chimney projecting from its roof. While the roof cornice of the east and west walls is plain, that of the north and south walls (see continuation sheets)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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displays a series of modillions.

The first story of the River Club's south side originally contained a door and two windows. These were eliminated in 1908 by the addition of the present canoe house. The canoe house has an arched opening on the west wall facing the river, two windows on the south wall, and one window on the east wall. The roof of the canoe house is accessible by a door in the cross gable of the main building. This doorway is flanked on either side by a window. A dormer window is located to the left of the cross gable.

The interior of the River Club is finished with simple, unpainted woodwork of the period. The first floor consists of a large social room with a stone fireplace at the north wall. A large opening in the center of the ceiling enables sails to be hoisted to the second floor, where they are dried. The second story is used mainly as a sail loft. It is accessible by a modified flying staircase which connects the first and second floors.

Although minor alterations and additions have been made to the Kennebunk River Club, its original function as a club house and the dramatic visual impact of its design have remained unchanged in 85 years.

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1889-1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

By the mid 19th century, America's wealthy and middle classes had found it both healthful and fashionable to escape the cities during the summer months. Improved rail and steamboat transportation enabled them to reach distant areas with ease. After the Civil War, Maine's beaches and lakes drew Philadelphians, New Yorkers, and Bostonians to such resorts as Bar Harbor, Poland Springs, and Mount Kineo.

Amid this climate of resort development a group of Boston businessmen purchased the entire shoreline of Kennebunkport in the 1870's. The small coastal village was in the twilight of its shipbuilding days. Yet through the efforts of the Kennebunkport Sea Shore Company, a new era of summer hotels and cottages dawned.

Along with the picturesque shore frontage and the long sandy beach, the adjacent Kennebunk River proved to be a major recreational asset for the town. By 1888 boating on the river was being termed "one of the most enjoyable features of life at Kennebunkport." Although many kinds of boats were used, the canoe was by far the most popular; by 1894 almost 500 of them were owned on the river.

Although for many only a casual pastime, canoeing became a highly organized activity. A "Lobster, Boat and Canoe Club" started by summer residents in the 1870's became incorporated as the Kennebunk River Club in August of 1889. That year the group began the construction of its present clubhouse, a striking example of the Shingle Style architecture which became favored for recreational buildings and summer cottages during the late 19th century. Completed and opened in 1890, the River Club displays an austere elegance characteristic of its New England setting.

While the architect remains unknown, his skillful use of the all-encompassing gable roof form suggests that he was familiar with such advanced designs of the period as John Calvin Stevens' "House by the Sea" (American Architect and Building News, September 12, 1885) and McKim, Mead and White's Low House of 1887 at Bristol, Rhode Island. The river front of the River Club presents an especially pleasing classical solution in its series of five small arches supporting a large arch which is, in turn, encompassed by a broad gable roof.

(see continuation sheets)

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Since its formal opening on August 2, 1890, the Kennebunk River Club has served as the focal point for summer activity on the Kennebunk River. The tremendous popularity of canoes continued until World War I, and the clubhouse was the starting point of all canoe trips up the river. These outings usually ended at a great stone outcropping known as Picnic Rock or Sunset Rock, which club first leased and then purchased in 1896. The Rock was also the scene of a three day annual canoe race in August.

To meet the increasing demand for canoes, they were made in Kennebunkport and the town became as famous for them as it once had been for sailing ships.

7
o
In the 1890's, one Joe Ranco ran a "manufactory and wharf at Cape Arundel near the Indian Encampment," and by the early 1900's J. S. Peabody was operating a business at Indian Canoe Landing, a site just above the River Club where Indians once had come to summer from their winter quarters on the Saco River. Now Indians came from the reservation at Old Town, pitched their tents at the mouth of the river, built the canoes ordered by summer people, and hired themselves out as guides to ladies who reserved their services for the afternoon tide one day a week all summer. It became a favorite way to entertain guests and it was not unusual for Peabody to rent 200 canoes on a flood tide.

After World War I, canoes were replaced by motorized launches and sailboats. The pendulum is now swinging back in favor of canoes. One sign of this has been the reestablishment of annual canoe races in 1972 after a lapse of approximately fifty years. Through these changes of fashion, the clubhouse of the Kennebunk River Club has continued to present its bold facade to the river, a strong symbol of a more confident and less hurried age than our own.

Property Kennebunk River Club

State Maine

Working Number 7.17.75.1381

York

TECHNICAL

Photos 1

Maps 1

2 cont. sheets (#7,8)

CONTROL

cm

OK 7.22.75

HISTORIAN

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

IT LOOKS LIKE
HIGHER QUALITY
VENTURI.

ACCEPT
LEBOUCH
8/9/75

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

ACCEPT
HAYNIE
8/25/75

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
COLE
9.3.75

BRANCH CHIEF

accept
HURD
8.8.75

KEEPER

[Signature]
SEP 8 1975

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered SEP 9 1975

Federal Register Entry 11-4-75

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kennebunk River Club

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Kennebunkport

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY

York

STATE

Maine

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Frank A. Beard

DATE OF PHOTO

1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

2

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

View of River Club from the west

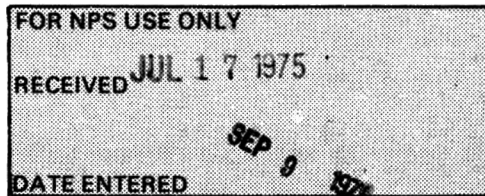
PHOTO NO.

1071

ME 9

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**



SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kennebunk River Club

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Kennebunkport

— VICINITY OF

COUNTY

York

STATE

Maine

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE

U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Series, Kennebunkport Quadrangle

SCALE

1:24000

DATE

1956

4 REQUIREMENTS

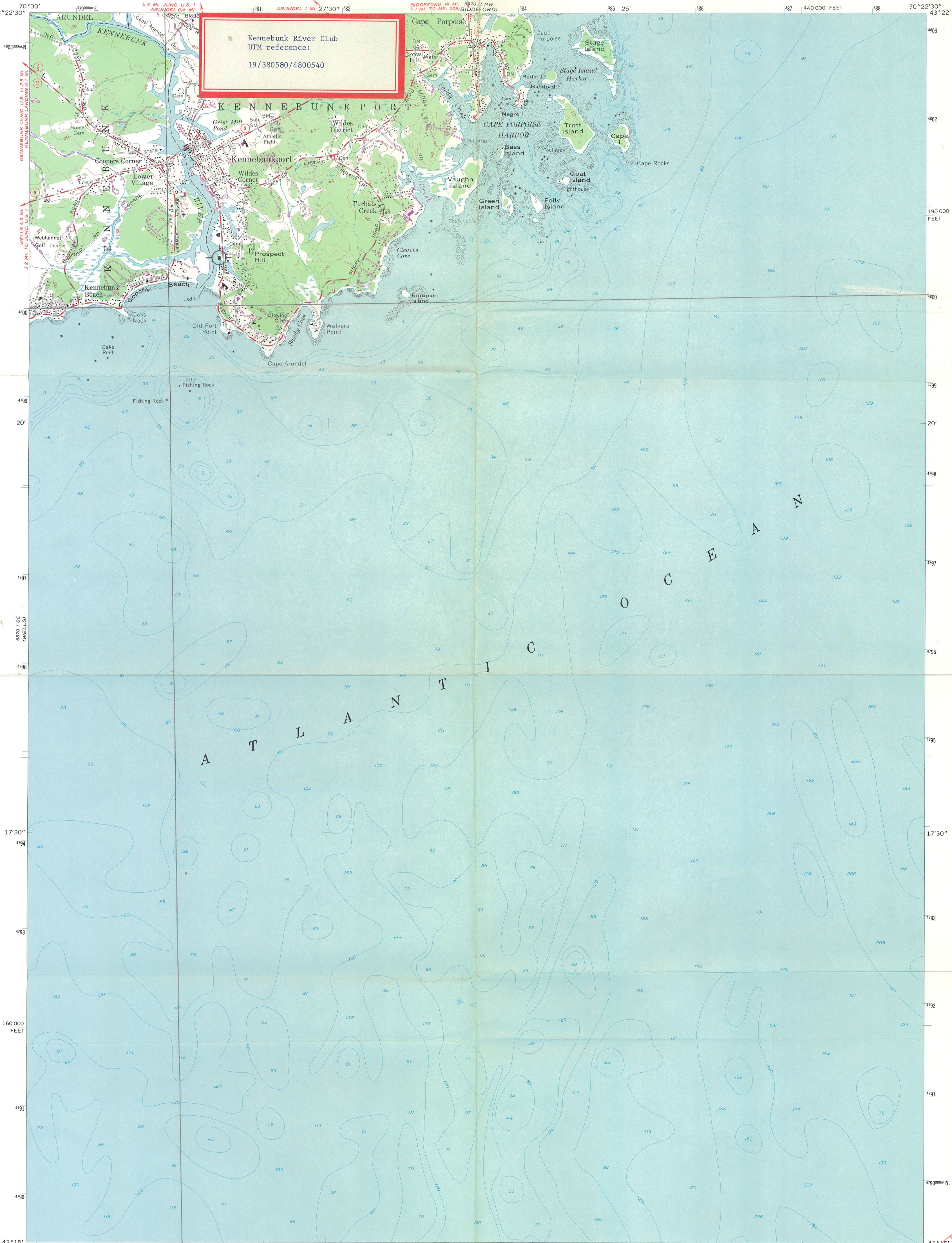
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

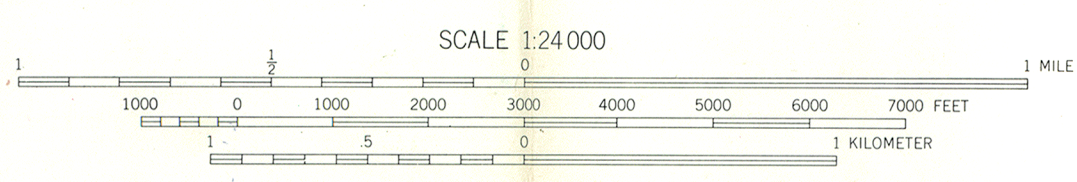
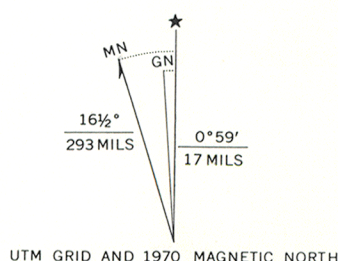
6870 / SE
(WELLS)

Kennebunk River Club
6870 IV SW
(BIDDEFORD POOL)

Kennebunk River Club
UTM reference:
19/380580/4800540

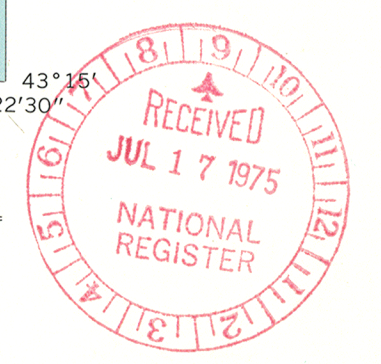


Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1941. Topography enlarged from
1:62 500-scale map of Biddeford quadrangle,
15 minute series. Original map by planetable surveys
1941. Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1956
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS chart 1205 (1954)
Polycyclic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maine coordinate system,
west zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological
Survey from aerial photographs taken 1970. This
information not field checked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Medium-duty — Light-duty
Unimproved dirt — State Route

KENNEBUNKPORT, ME.
SW/4 BIDDEFORD 15' QUADRANGLE
N4315—W7022.5/7.5
1956
PHOTOREVISED 1970
AMS 6970 IV SW—SERIES V811



19/380580/4800540

Kennebunk River Club

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MAINE

Date Entered SEP 9 1975

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Bangor Children's Home	Bangor Penobscot County
Friends Meeting House	Casco Cumberland County
Big Black Site	Aroostook County
Kennebunk River Club	Kennebunkport York County

Also Notified

Hon. Edmund S. Muskie
Hon. William D. Hathaway
Hon. William S. Cohen
Hon. David F. Emery

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. James H. Mundy
Director, Maine Historical
Preservation Commission
31 Western Avenue
Augusta, Maine 04330

Regional Director, North Atlantic

Region

PR

MMott

9/15/75

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 3-7-77
Reviewer INITIALS: JTB
NR LOE (9-9-75)

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: ¹ Kennebunk River Club

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION: Ocean Ave.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY/TOWN: Kennebunkport

STATE: Maine

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY: **FIRST**

York

code

031

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE; STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

HABS (sheets, photos, data pages, 1965)

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR
 Substantially intact-1
- unknown - 4
- not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR
 Substantially intact-2
- unknown - 5
- not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS
 Substantially intact-3
- unknown - 6
- Not applicable-9

-Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION - EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED
- Unexcavated

- UNALTERED
 ALTERED
- Reconstructed
- Excavated

ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED
- Unknown

ACCESS - restricted Yes-unrestricted No access Unknown

historic district? YES NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES NO
IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES NO
IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE: YES NO Saved? YES NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- clubhouse

now- clubhouse

SIGNIFICANCE:

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS

- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION

- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW/Gov't/politics
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS-GOVERNMENT

- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

- entertainment
- health
- recreation
- settlement
- socio/cultural
- urban & common planning

Claims

"first" YES NO

"oldest" YES NO

"only" YES NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: *Shingle Style*

architect/m.builder:

engineer:

landscape/garden designer:

artist/artisan:

interior decorator:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role

appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): *1889-90*

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre) /

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

Frame, shingling^(ing) 2 stories, rectangular,

^{gabled} gabled roof with prominent ~~gable~~ ^{cross-gable} dormers, ^{stone} interior chimney, center double-door entrance

with side lights, ~~set in~~ full-width recessed porch, ^{railed} with inverted arch and spindle rail,

elliptical-arched 2nd-story recessed screen porch, gable end attic louvers, polygonal

side bays; rustic interiors; minor alterations; canoe house addition, 1908. Excellent

example of the popular shingle style used for recreational and resort buildings; deve-

loped as a resort because of improved railroad and steamboat services.

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)