Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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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 equiped 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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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 dryed. 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.



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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 cance 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 also 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" (<u>American</u> <u>Architect and Building News</u>, 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)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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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.

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.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7



Form No. 10-301a (Pev. 10-7)

> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ON	NLY		
RECEIVED JUL 1	7 1975		
DATE ENTERED	SEP g	1975	

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

1	NAME	in the realized	
	HISTORIC Kennebunk River Club		
	AND/OR COMMON		
2	LOCATION		
Alternation of the second	CITY, TOWNVICINITY OF Kennebunkport	COUNTY York	STATE Maine
3	PHOTO REFERENCE		That inc
	PHOTO CREDIT Frank A. Beard	DATE OF PHOTO 19	975
	NEGATIVE FILED AT Maine Historic Preservation Comm	ission	(\mathfrak{F})
4	IDENTIFICATION	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET		PHOTO NO. 107/

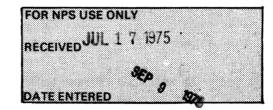
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View of River Club from the west

Form No. 10-301 (Rev. 10-74)

> 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

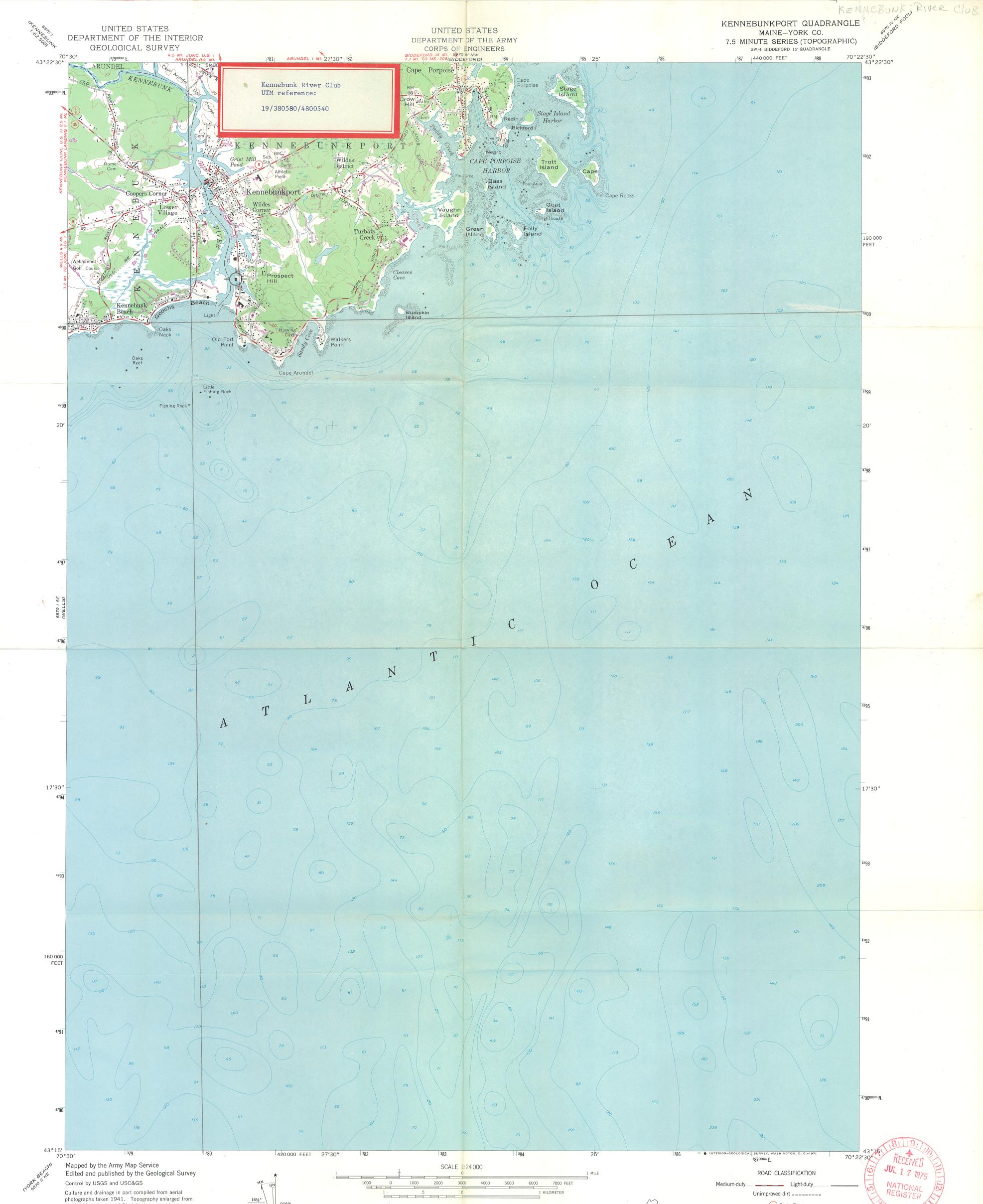
HISTORIC

		Kennebunk River	Club				
	AND/OR COMMON						
2	LOCATION	Ν					
	CITY, TOWN	Kennebunkport	VICINITY OF	COUNTY	York	STATE	Maine
		•	2				
3	MAP REFE	RENCE					
	SOURCE	U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min	ute Series, Kennebun	kport Qua	adrangle		
	SCALE	1:24000	DATE		1956		
	REQUIREN	MENTS	*				
1	•						
	TO BE INCLUDED						
	1. PROPERTY E	BOUNDARIES					

2. NORTH ARROW

.

3. UTM REFERENCES



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) UTM GRID AND 1970 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET Polyconic 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 19/380580/4800540 Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1970. This information not field checked

16½°

293 MILS

0°59' 17 MILS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 8.7 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST KENNEBUNKPORT, ME. SW/4 BIDDEFORD 15' QUADRANGLE N4315-W7022.5/7.5

State Route

MAINE

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1956 PHOTOREVISED 1970 AMS 6970 IV SW-SERIES V811

Kennebunk River Club

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

	STATE	MAINE		
Date	Entered	SEP	9	1975

Name

Bangor Children's Home

Friends Meeting House

Big Black Site

Konnebunk River Club

Location

Bangor Penobscot County

Casco Cumberland County

Aroostook County

Kennebunkport York County

Also Notified

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

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region PR MMott 9/15/75 State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Jamas H. Mundy Director, Maine Historical Preservation Commission 31 Wastern Avenue Augusta, Maine 04330

NE Data Sheet Reviewer NAME AS IT AFFEARS IN FLOERAL PECISTER. Kennebunk River Club OTHER KANES: LOCATION: Ocean Ave. STREET & NUMBER CITY. TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Kennebunkport FIRST VICINITY OF STATE code Maine York 031 OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHEP. HABS (sheets, photos, data FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME) : ADMINISTRATOR(underline) MPS REGION: (CIRCLE) ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SCUTHEAST MIDWEST SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST FEATURES: EXTERIOR FINTPONO Substartiz Substantially intert-2 Substantially intace-3 unknown - 4 HIMAROWAL ----_. unknown -6 - not applicable - 7 __ not applicable - 8 _ Not applicable-9 .Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0 CONDITION - EXCELLENT _DETERIORATED UNALTERED RIGINAL SITE _6000 RUINS ALTERED MOVED FAIR - UNEXPOSED Reconstructed Unknown _Unexcavated _Excavated ACCESS -S-restricted Yes-unrestricted No access Unknown historic district? YES WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? IF YES, NAME: WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES IF YES, NAME: ADAPTIVE USE: YES Saved? YES 210 FUNCTION (S): (use vocabulary words) thenclubh now-**SIGNIFICANCE:** ARCHEULUGY PREHISTORIC _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE _RELIGION entertainment ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC _CONSERVATION _LAW/Gov't/politics _science health AGRICULTURE _ECONOMICS -UTERATURE recreation LACHITECTURE _LOUCATION _MILITARY -SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN __settlement ART _ENGINEERING MUSIC _socio/cultural COMMERCE -.EXPLORATION -PHILOSOPHY _TRANSPORTATION _urban & conmun -COMMUNICATIONS _INDUSTRY -POLITICS GOVERNMENT -OTHER ISPECIFY planning INVENTION Ciaims "first" YES *eoldest? Yrs NO "only" YES

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

Shingle Style

architect/m.builder: landscape/garden designer: interior decorator:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES: personal (label role appropriate date) events

institutional

DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): DATE (S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE (S) :

SOURCE: (OF NOMINATION) PRIVATE STATS LOCAL GOV"T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER FEDEPAL AGENCY: ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre) /

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here) Frame, shinging 2 stories, rectangular, aalled gabled roof with prominent **with** dormers, interior chimney, center double-door entrance with side lights, set in full-width recessed porch 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; developed as a resort because of improved railroad and steamboat services.

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

engineer: artist/artisan: builder/contractor:

: .