

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Maple Corner Historic District

Other names/site number: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: County Road, Kent Hill Road, Worcester Road

City or town: Calais State: Vermont County: Washington

Not For Publication Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>Date</p>
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In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title: or Tribal Government	State or Federal agency/bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>23</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>25</u>	<u>8</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing
- AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding
- COMMERCE/TRADE: Store
- DOMESTIC /single dwelling
- /multiple dwelling
- /secondary structure

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EDUCATION: School
SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: store
DOMESTIC /single dwelling
/secondary structure

EDUCATION: school
SOCIAL: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE
MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival
MODERNE: Modernistic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood, Stone, Brick, Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Maple Corner Historic District is a densely settled village clustered around Pekin Brook, whose power led to the village's growth. It retains the look and feel of a nineteenth-century mill village that served the surrounding farming area for 100 years. The Maple Corner Historic District comprises mainly 1½ story commercial, institutional, and residential buildings dating from the early nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. These buildings are primarily Classic Cottage or Greek Revival Style. Maple

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Corner developed as an industrial and agricultural community and is now mainly a residential community.

The evolution of Maple Corner is similar to that of many small Vermont villages and towns. The village started with gristmills and sawmills, taking advantage of the water power of Pekin Brook. Small businesses soon followed, serving the surrounding farmers. Coinciding with the industrial and commercial growth was the steady growth of residences. The most significant development period, from 1850 to 1880, is documented by most of the district, predominantly residential. Maple Corner retains the appearance of a mid to late-nineteenth-century village, with a collection of commercial and residential buildings centered around a water source, with remarkably little new construction in the twentieth century. The dominating architectural style is the Cape Style. There are two examples of twentieth-century homes in the village and several smaller sheds and outbuildings.

There are 23 contributing and seven non-contributing buildings. There are two contributing sites and one non-contributing structure. The resources within the historic district retain a high degree of integrity, contributing to the district's overall integrity. The historic integrity and physical character of the district, with its mixture of open land, a pond, and dense village residences, evoke an early Vermont village.

Narrative Description

The Maple Corner Historic District is in the western portion of the Town of Calais. Located in northeastern Washington County, Calais is roughly ten miles from the center of the state capital of Montpelier. Marshfield and Cabot border the town to the east, Plainfield and East Montpelier to the south, Worcester to the west, and Woodbury to the north. The town of Calais is 38 square miles and contains 23,040 acres. The topography of Calais is uneven and hilly. The soil is generally rich and fertile, and there is an ample water supply. The region's hilly topography led to the development of separate settlement areas and contributed to each village's social and economic isolation from the others.¹

The village of Maple Corner is one of five unincorporated villages in the Town of Calais, with the others being Adamant, Pekin, Kents Corner, East Calais, and North Calais. Maple Corner is on the western side of the town. The village straddles County Road and the arterial roads of Kent Hill Road and Worcester Road. The Maple Corner Historic District forms the core of the village.

Calais is a typical Vermont town consisting of commercial and residential villages, forested hills, open agricultural land, and rural farmsteads. Maple Corner is a small village built in a narrow valley on the southeast border of Curtis Pond. The village developed throughout

¹ Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village National Register District*, Washington County, Vermont, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010, p.1.

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the nineteenth century in a linear plan dictated by exploiting the Curtis Pond and Curtis Brook's abundant water power to operate sawmills and grist mills.

The district lies primarily along three tree-lined dirt roads in the center of Maple Corner Village. The primary road through the Maple Corner Historic District is County Road. Two side streets branch from County Road within the village: Kent Hill Road and Worcester Road. The junction of County Road and Kent Hill Road is at the bottom, with County Road rising in a southerly and northerly direction. Development patterns are consistent throughout the village, with a single row of buildings fronting directly onto the road and miscellaneous outbuildings and barns in the rear. A commercial building, the former schoolhouse, and the community center/Grange form the community center.

The primary village buildings are predominantly vernacular, gable-roofed, 1½-story, clapboarded structures set close to and facing the road. The core buildings front County Road. **HD#8** is at the district's eastern end on Kent Hill Road, and **HD#15** is on Worcester Road at the western end. The district has intact examples of several types of historic resources generally found in Vermont towns of its size, including one schoolhouse, a creamery, a Grange building, a general store, farmsteads, barns, and single-family houses. Most of the historic buildings in the district have granite foundations, timber frame structures, and clapboard siding. The granite foundation blocks most likely came from a local quarry on Robinson Cemetery Road or regional quarries such as Barre, Woodbury, and Adamant.

The dominating architectural style in Maple Corner is the Classic Cottage Cape Style (**HD#1**, **HD#8**, and **HD#14**), which is reflected in the oldest extant buildings of the historic district. These houses possess distinctive Classic Cape-style features such as center eaves side entrance, cornice returns, and corner boards. Vernacular builder-inspired examples finish the historic district, presenting minimal architectural details that enrich the visual character of the district with vergeboards, cornerboards, and full-width or wrap-around porches. The district has a few post-1900 buildings, including a Mid-Century Modern home and two post-1970 houses. There are also two dams.

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View at the corner of County Road and Worcester Road. HD#1 is in the background. HD#14 is to the left, and HD#2 is to the right (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

The historic farmsteads contain mid-nineteenth-century houses and farm buildings. The district has several prominent barns, including **HD#1a**, **HD#6a**, **HD#8a**, and **HD#9a**. Most of these historic agricultural resources retain architectural integrity. There is a single educational building in the community (**HD#4**) and a Grange Hall (**HD#3**). Commercial buildings are limited to the general store (**HD#12**). **HD#7** once served as a cheese factory and creamery. The village retains most of its historic resources and the overall layout and design of a modest, mid-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Vermont town.

1. Samuel Robinson House, 117 West County Road, c.1830, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 28-feet by 38-feet, eaves front, wood-frame, single-family, Classic Cottage Style building. It has a moderate setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Resting on a stone foundation, it is clad in wood clapboards and a corrugated metal roof. Fenestration consists of 2/2 windows with wood window hoods. Centered on the front (east) elevation is the central entrance protected by a projecting gable-roofed porch supported by square wood columns. Spanning the south gable end is a shed-roofed porch with modern wood posts. Architectural features include corner boards. Projecting from the rear (west) elevation is a 1½ story, 28-foot by 38-foot ell with a steeply pitched wall dormer on the south elevation.

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Figure 2 HD#1, C.1920 (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

1a. Mower Barn, 117 West County Road, c.1888, contributing building

This is a two-story, 60-foot by 42-foot, gable-front bank barn. It is to the southeast of the main house. Resting on a reinforced concrete and stone foundation, the barn has a standing seam roof and clapboard siding. A sliding door capped with a multi-pane transom is centered on the second story of the front (east) and rear entrances. There is a ramp accessing the entry on both elevations. The center door on the east elevation is flanked by a 6/6 wood sash and a pedestrian door. A pair of 12/8 windows flank the west elevation on the first story. There is a 12/12 window centered on the second story. The south elevation has a sliding door and a band of fixed, multi-pane windows on the lower level. There is a twentieth-century metal ventilator centered on the roof ridge. A two-story, 24-foot by 16-foot, stud-framed ell projects from the south elevation.

The barn replaced a c. 1850 barn that burned to the ground in July 1888. It is believed that some of the c.1850 timbers were reused in the c.1888 structure.

1b. Sugarhouse, c.1960, contributing building

This is a one-story, rectangular plan sugarhouse with a monitor roof and vertical barn board siding. Extending from the east elevation is a shed roof addition.

1c. Carriage Barn / House, c.1970, non-contributing building due to alterations.

This is a 1½ story, gabled roof building clad in clapboard siding and a corrugated metal roof. Fenestration includes 6/6 windows. A shed roof addition extends from the south elevation, and a shed roof wall dormer is on the south roof line. This was formerly the carriage barn.

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1d. Pavilion, c.2010, non-contributing structure due to age

This is an open pavilion supported by square posts. It is capped with a corrugated metal gable roof.

Captain Samuel Robinson, an early proprietor and member of the town survey committees, built this house.

2. Robinson Barn, 90 West County Road, c.1880, non-contributing building due to alterations

This is a two-story, 52-feet by 30-feet, gable-front barn converted into living units. It has a minimal setback and is oriented perpendicular to the road. It is clad with vertical wood barn board and rests on a stone foundation. The second story projects slightly over the first story. Centered on the front (west) elevation is a double barn door. There is also a pedestrian entrance at the southern end of the west elevation. The hay loft door on the second story has been filled with a fixed multi-pane window and wood clapboard. A one-story, 12-feet by 44-feet shed roof addition abuts the north elevation. There is a shed-roofed dormer on the north roof line. Adjoining the south elevation is a 30-foot by 80-foot building with board and batten siding on the south gable end and wood clapboard siding on the east elevation. Fenestration in this section consists of sliding casement windows.

2a. A-Frame, c. 1965, non-contributing building due to relocation

This is an A-Frame building with corrugated metal roofing. This building used to be located on Curtis Pond on the Plumb property and was relocated to this site in the 1980s. Jackie Cahegan lived in the building when it was converted to a residence.

See HD#14 for early history. Floyd and Beatrice Fitch purchased the property in 1961. They "moved to their new home, which they built at Maple Corner."²

3. Community Hall, 84 West County Road, c.1870, contributing building

This is a 2½-story, 24-feet by 48-feet, four-bay by two-bay building. It has a moderate setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Resting on a concrete block foundation, it is clad with wood clapboards. Fenestration is 2/2 windows. Projecting from the north gable end is a two-story, one-bay by two-bay, flat-roofed addition. There is a gable-roofed entrance porch on the west elevation of this addition. Modern wood stairs access the second story on the rear (east) elevation. There is an enclosed stairway at the southeast corner.

² *Times Argus*, Barre, Vermont, December 29, 1961, p.2.

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Figure 3 Community Hall (HD#3) before being moved to its present location (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

This building was originally Bailey's Store in Gospel Hollow. It was moved to its present site c.1900. Grange #470 purchased the building on January 25, 1921.

4. Maple Corner School, 58 West County Road, c.1858, contributing building

This is a two-story, 28-feet by 38-feet, cross-gabled, wood-frame school building. It has a moderate setback. It rests on a granite stone foundation and is clad in wood clapboard and a standing seam metal roof. The entrance is on the west elevation of the 17-foot by 21-foot south gable. The door has an Italianate bracketed, flat-roofed door hood. The bell tower has a Gothic louvered window, a bracketed cornice, and a metal bell-cast roof. Fenestration includes 12/12 wood windows with peaked hoods. There are four large 12/12 sash windows on the second story of the east elevation. There is a covered stairway on the north elevation. An 11-feet by 16-feet carport abuts the south gable end. Architectural details include peaked window hoods, corner boards with capitals, boxed eaves, and returns. The two rooms are on the second floor, and the first floor was initially used as a community hall.

4a. Shed, c. 1980, non-contributing building due to age

This is a one-story shed with vertical wood siding and a corrugated metal roof.

4b. Outhouse, c. 1890, contributing building

This is a one-story, gabled roof building with board and batten siding. There are two entrances on the front (west) elevation.

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Philo and Mary Hawkins bought the property in 1851. The Hawkins sold the property to the Town School District #5 that same year. The Calais Elementary School opened in 1971, and the district sold the building to Michael and Patty Macke, who converted the building into a residence. The bell was removed in 1973 and relocated to the Old West Church in Kents Corner.

5. William E. Toby House, 52 West County Road, c.1865, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 25-feet by 30-feet, three-bay by five-bay, gable-front, wood-frame, single-family house. It has a moderate setback and is oriented perpendicular to the road. Resting on a stone foundation, it is clad in wood clapboard and a corrugated metal roof. Fenestration includes 2/2 sash. The bargeboard decorates the front gable. Spanning the front (west) and north elevations is an open porch with a corrugated metal roof and paired posts. There is an entrance abutment on the north eaves' elevation, accessed from the porch. Extending from the rear gable end is a one-story gable roof ell. A brick chimney rises from the gable ridge.

6. George Tewksbury House, 32 West County Road, c. 1850, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 21-feet by 40-feet, five-bay by two-bay, gable-roofed, wood-frame, single-family house. The building has a moderate setback and is oriented perpendicular to the road. Resting on a stone foundation, it is clad in wood clapboards and a composite shingle roof. Fenestration includes 6/6 replacement windows. There is a shed dormer on the front (south) roofline with 6/6 replacement windows. Centered on the front (south) elevation is the entrance flanked by 1/2 sidelights. Projecting from the east gable end is a 1½ story wing and clapboard barn. There is decorative bargeboard in the west gable peak. A Colonial Revival porch with square columns spans the front (south) and west elevations. The columns rest on a half-height porch wall clad with wood clapboards. Projecting from the north elevation is a 16-feet by 30-feet ell. A corbelled brick chimney rises from the roofline.

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Figure 4 HD#6 C.1910 (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

6a. Barn, c.1850, contributing building

This is a 21-feet by 40-feet, eaves-front English barn. It is clad in vertical barnboard. There is a sliding barn, pedestrian, and two hayloft doors on the front (west) elevation.

George and Lenora Tewksbury purchased the land in 1850. George Tewksbury was a carpenter and joiner and most likely built the extant house. Oscar and Nora Gallagher purchased it in 1923. The Gallaghers used the house primarily as a summer home.

7. Calais Creamery, 23 Kent Hill Road, c.1885, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 24-feet by 36-feet, three-bay by two-bay, eaves-front, gable-roofed, wood-frame, single-family home. It has a moderate setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Resting on a concrete block foundation, it is clad with a composite shingle roof. The basement level is exposed on the south, east, and north elevations. There is aluminum siding in the first story and vertical siding in the second story. Fenestration includes 1/1 replacement windows. A porch supported by square posts mounted on a knee wall spans the center two bays of the front elevation. There is an interior brick chimney at each end of the gable ridge.

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Figure 5 Calais Creamery (HD#6) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

7a. Barn, 23 Kent Hill Road, c. 1890, contributing building

This is a one-story barn with a saltbox roof clad in a vertical wood board. There are swinging barn doors and a pedestrian door on the south (front) elevation. The east elevation has a 6/6 sash and a fixed 12-light sash. There is a brick chimney rising from the gable ridge.

When John Van Rensselaer Kent (1813-1892) gained ownership of **HD#9**, this property was consolidated with the Kent lands. This parcel was split off in 1896 when Charles V. Kent “sold the old cheese factory building to Jerome B. Van Ornam.”³ Van Ornam sold it to the Calais Creamery in 1904. It returned to the Van Ornam family in 1913.

8. Remember Kent House Jr., 97 Kent Hill Road, c.1830, contributing building.

This is a 1½ story, 26-feet by 33-feet, five-bay by two-bay, wood-frame, Classic Cottage-style, single-family home. It has a moderate setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Clad in wood clapboard and a standing seam metal roof, the building rests on a concrete block foundation. Fenestration consists of 2/2 replacement windows. Centered on the (south) elevation is an entrance flanked by two windows. There are two windows on the first and second stories on the east and west gable ends. Projecting from the south elevation is an 18-foot by 24-foot wing and an attached 26-foot by 36-foot barn. The wing has a single-pane window and a gabled wall dormer. A porch with brackets and turned posts spans the front elevation of the wing. Architectural features include cornice returns, corner boards, and simple wood window hoods.

³ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 12, 1896, p.5.

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Remember Kent Jr. (1799-1881) most likely built this house and lived here into the 1870s.

8a. Barn, 97 Kent Hill Road, c.1850, contributing building

This is a 1½ story bank barn with an exposed lower level. The barn has board and batten siding and a corrugated metal roof. The street-facing eaves (south) elevation has three square windows. One is a replacement 1/1 window, and the other are 3/3. The lower level has one 1/1 window, two 6/6 windows, and a sliding barn door.

9. Lamphere House, 26 Kent Hill Road, c.1964, contributing building

This is a one-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame, single-family, Mid-Century Modern house. It has a significant setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Resting on a concrete foundation, it is sheathed in barnboard siding reused from a cow barn located on the property. The cow barn is no longer extant. The shallow-pitched roof has composite shingles. Fenestration includes single pane casement windows in long vertical, recessed openings running from the foundation to the eaves. An entrance at the north side of the west elevation is centered in the north elevation. The first floor has a medium-depth overhang over the foundation.



Figure 6 Original John Van Rensselaer Kent House (now destroyed) and barn. (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

9a. John Van Rensselaer Kent Barn, c.1850, contributing building

This is a two-story, post-and-beam English Style barn with vertical board siding. There are sliding barn doors and 6/6 windows on the south elevation. A projecting gable roof protects the front (south) elevation entrance. There is a pedestrian entrance, two fixed square windows on the first story, and a fixed six-pane sash centered in the gable peak.

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9b. John Van Rensselaer Kent Barn c.1880, contributing building

This is a one-story saltbox barn sheathed in vertical barn board siding. The west-facing (front) elevation has two barn doors, a window on the first story, and a window on the second story. The east-facing gable end has a sliding door, a 6/6 window on the lower level, five small square, evenly-spaced window openings, a medium-sized sash at the first story, and a single double-hung sash centered in the gable peak.

9c. Shed, c.1920, contributing building

This is a small shed with a gable roof, deep eaves, and novelty board siding. There is a 12-lite fixed window in the west gable end.

This property remained in the Kent family for several decades - Abdiel Kent, Ira Kent, Remember Kent, and Ezekiel Kent. In September 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lamphere "purchased the Julius Wheeler place at Maple Corner and will move in this fall."⁴ In December 1963, the Lamphere's "were left homeless when a fire destroyed their two-family house."⁵ Their son, James Lamphere, was an architect with Burlington's Goodrich Architects and may have assisted in designing their new home.

10. William White House, 9879 County Road, c.1835, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, low-pitched roof, wood-frame, single-family Classic Cottage-style home. It has a large setback and is oriented parallel to the road. It is situated on a hill, rising above County Road towards the west. Extending from the north, the eaves side elevation is a long, gable-roofed ell with two shed-roof dormers. There is a gable roof protecting the entrance on the west ell. Fenestration consists of both 1/1 and 2/2 sash. Architectural features include corner pilasters with caps, cornice returns, and peaked lintel boards. A bay window with 2/2 windows projects from the south-facing eaves side. There is an enclosed porch abutting the west-facing gable end. Two corbelled brick chimneys rise from the rear roof line of the main block and the end of the ell.

⁴ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, September 24, 1956, p.9.

⁵ *Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vermont, December 23, 1963, p.11.

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Figure 7 William White House (HD#10) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

10a. Garage, c.1920, contributing building

This is a one-story, two-bay garage sheathed in a vertical board. There is a pedestrian door and sash window on the north-facing eaves side.

This property belonged to several owners in the early nineteenth century, including Joel Robinson (1772-1832), Abdiel Bliss (1740-1805), and several members of the Kent family - Rachel Kent, Ira Kent, Abdiel Kent, Remember Kent, and Ezekiel Kent. A member of the Kent family most likely built the extant house.

11. Heise House 17 County Road, c.1995, non-contributing building due to age

This is a two-story, log-framed, 24-feet by 50-feet, single-family house. There is a recessed entry on the first floor at the southeast corner. There is a porch directly above the entrance. Fenestration included 2/2 windows.

12. Maple Corner Store, 31 West County Road, 1948, non-contributing building

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This is a two-story, 34-feet by 64-feet, gable-front, wood-frame building. There is cmu siding on the first floor and T1-11 siding on the second story. Resting on a concrete slab, it is clad with a composite shingle roof. Fenestration consists of 2/2 replacement windows. The first-story front (southeast) elevation consists of a storefront window and recessed entrance on the western bay, a pedestrian entrance, and a 1/1 window on the eastern bay. An interior cinderblock chimney rises from the rear (northwest) gable end. A pent-roof overhang spans the front elevation. Two one-story cinder block additions project from each corner of the rear (northwest) elevation. Wood stairs access an open deck on the rear gable end. Centered in the rear gable peak are three closely arranged 1/1 windows.



Figure 8 Lackey's Store (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

In March 1903, George Elgin Mann (1870-1953) purchased the “red shop” and soon added “a repair and blacksmith shop.”⁶ The Adamant Cooperative voted to buy the store in 1945. An October 1947 fire destroyed the store. A new building was completed in 1948.

13. Dwight Marsh House, 41 West County Road, c.1848, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 28-feet by 36-feet, five-bay by two-bay, wood frame, single-family home. It has a moderate setback and is oriented perpendicular to the road. The entrance is centered on the south elevation, topped by a wood lintel and flanked by ½ sidelights above paneled bases. Fenestration includes 6/1 replacement sash. Centered in the gable peaks are gable vents. Extending from the west elevation is a 20-foot by 24-foot gable roof wing with an open porch at the southwest corner. The lower level of the wing is exposed. Spanning the north eaves side is an enclosed porch. Architectural features include cornice returns and corner boards. There are solar panels on the south roof plane. An interior brick

⁶ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, June 18, 1903, p.2.

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chimney rises from the north portion of the gable ridge. It is believed that this building has vertical plank walls.⁷



Figure 9 Dwight Marsh House (HD#14) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

13a. Barn, 41 West County Road, c.1980, non-contributing building

This is a two-story, 24-feet by 24-feet garage with two-bay garage bays on the north elevation. The street-facing east elevation has a full porch supported by wood posts. The second story has a living space.

14. Robinson House, 81 West County Road, c.1845, contributing building

This is a 1½ story, 24-feet by 32-feet, five-bay by three-bay, wood-frame, single-family, Classic Cottage Style house. It has a moderate setback and is oriented parallel to the road. Resting on a stone foundation, it is clad in wood clapboards and a standing seam metal roof. Fenestration includes 6/6 wood windows with peaked lintel boards. Centered on the front (east) elevation is a paneled entrance door flanked by sidelights. Projecting from the south gable end is a one-story, 15-feet by 23-feet wing. A shed roof addition abuts the end of the wing. The east elevation has a pedestrian entrance and a picture window flanked by 1/1 windows. Adjoining the wing is a 14-feet by 15-feet garage bay. An open shed-roofed porch spans the northern portion of the wing.

⁷Interview with building owner

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Figure 10 Robinson House (HD#15) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

15. Maple Corner Dam, c. 1856, contributing site

This is a dry-laid stone and earth-fill structure. It is approximately 80 feet wide and 10 feet high. It has been breached at the center. It is the site of the former red shop, grist mill, and blacksmith shop.

16. Curtis Pond Dam, c.1856, contributing site

The Curtis Pond Dam is a stone and earth-fill gravity dam with a breeched stone masonry dam. The dam has an overall length of approximately 113 ft and a maximum height of about 12 feet. It is made of large, dry, laid rubble stone. The center spillway is approximately six feet long and runs 17 feet from the upstream side to the downstream side of the dam. The spillway's channel bottom is composed of mortared large flat stones. The sides of the spillway channel are lined with intermittently mortared stones. The spillway has a straight drop to the tailwater pool. There is a drain below the weir spillway. The pond impoundment is approximately 76 acres. The impoundment is about 120 feet long with a maximum height of 14 feet. The outlet consists of a broad, crested, five-foot-wide weir located near the dam's center.⁸

⁸ Kenny, Kate and Catherine A. Quinn. *Historical Resource Review and Archeological Resources Assessment, Curtis Pond Dam, (VT State ID #40.09) Rehabilitation Project, Calais, Washington County, Vermont*. University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program, Burlington, Vermont, 2023, p.28.

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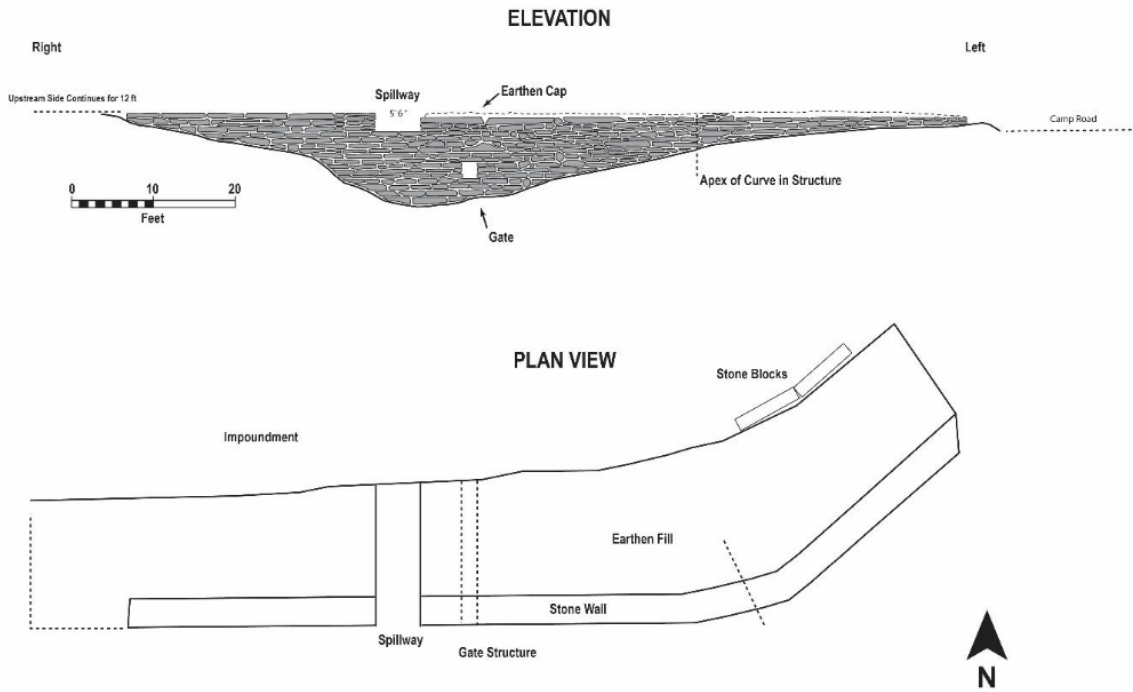


Figure 11. Curtis Pond Dam (UVM).

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or, represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1815-1974

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Maple Corner Historic District is a representative example of a Vermont mill village, which grew around a source of waterpower that fostered the development of gristmills and sawmills. The village's prosperity created a period of community development in the second half of the nineteenth century. The architecture and development of Maple Corner remain visible to document its history, prosperity, and contribution to the growth of the Town of Calais. The Maple Corner Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level for community planning and development and Criterion C for architecture. The period of significance begins in 1815, the date of the earliest building in the district, and ends in 1974, the fifty-year-old threshold.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Maple Corner Historic District is a rural mill village that grew up around Curtis Brook. This waterpower enabled the development of mills and industries processing local raw materials such as lumber and grain. Although the buildings of those first enterprises no longer stand and the industries responsible for the nineteenth-century growth of the village no longer operate, Maple Corner today continues to document that early history with its architecture and visible patterns of community development.

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

The Maple Corner Historic District is significant under Criterion A for community planning and development. The historic district documents the establishment and growth of a mill village in central Vermont. The hamlet initially developed along Pekin Brook, with mills taking advantage of the waterpower. A small village steadily grew alongside these industries, including residences, commercial entities, social halls, and schools. Calais was established in 1781 and surveyed by 1786. Unlike other Vermont towns, Calais never developed a core settlement area. Instead, six unincorporated villages developed independently and spread throughout the town: Adamant, East Calais, North Calais, Kents Corner, Maple Corner, and Pekin.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Maple Corner Historic District is significant under Criterion C for its intact collection of historic resources representing Vermont's architectural forms and styles from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The greatest concentration of extant buildings date from 1815 to 1888, representing development and prosperity.

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The district possesses significance in the area of Architecture as a well-preserved example of a historic New England village that exhibits popular domestic and institutional architectural styles of the nineteenth century.

Settlers eventually replaced the pioneer dwellings with more permanent clapboarded post-and-beam frame houses, and "their replacement was regarded as proof of progress" in Calais.⁹ The Maple Corner homes were likely built with local materials – "granite from the Adamant stone quarries, bricks from the brickyard in Gospel Hollow, timbers and clapboards milled at the Kents Corner and Maple Corner sawmills, and hardware and nails forged at the local blacksmith's shop."¹⁰

The Maple Corner houses are primarily post and beam, mortise-and-tenon frame buildings with horizontal board siding. There are two examples of a frame house with vertical plank walls (**HD #13 & HD#14**). Many settlers may have built their homes with the scribe rule technique and then the square rule method. Bucklin Slayton, a master carpenter, built many frame dwelling houses and stores in Montpelier and Calais. Slayton used the square rule construction method in the late 1820s. This technique superseded the old scribe rule method of framing a building and introducing parts standardization.

Most farmers confined their stylistic choices to a simple vernacular version of this classical Greek Revival architectural vocabulary. The earliest houses surviving in the historic district are examples of the Cape form, later refashioned with Greek Revival-style features (**HD #1, HD#7, HD#9, HD#13 & HD#14**). The schoolhouse (**HD #3**) features a distinctive bell tower and Greek Revival entry entablature. The Community Center (**HD#3**) was a former store and moved to its present site in 1900.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Calais builders modified their constructions by introducing simplified techniques associated with the balloon-frame building system using dimensional milled lumber. Corner pilasters, cornice returns, and wide friezes are typical details found on buildings throughout the district. Windows and doors have peaked or flat stock window heads. There are distinctive porches on buildings **HD#5, HD#6, and HD#10**.

The district has several nineteenth-century farmsteads, most notably **HD#1, HD#8, HD#9, and HD#14**. Historically, a typical farm in the district included a variety of landforms: front yard, dooryard, kitchen garden, barnyard, fruit orchard, cultivated fields, hay meadows, grazing pasture, timber woodlot, maple sugar bush, and pond. Farmers organized their layout around topology and land quality toward an efficient farming operation. Farmsteads were a cluster of buildings that included a farmhouse and produce storage structures,

⁹ Garvin, James L. *A Building History of Northern New England*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001, p.7.

¹⁰ *Kents Corner Historic District Design Review Guide*. Calais Historic Preservation Commission, Calais, Vermont, 2008, p.18.

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vehicle storage structures, domestic structures, and home-industry workshops. Field patterns, hedgerows, stone walls, and fence lines mark property boundaries.

As the mid-twentieth century approached, development in the village slowed considerably due to the Great Depression and World War II. An example is the new Maple Corner Store (**HD #12**) following a disastrous fire. Another example is a mid-century house (**HD #9**) that replaced a destroyed nineteenth-century farmhouse.

Settlement of Calais, 1780-1850

Maple Corner, located in the northern part of Washington County, was historically part of the 36-square-mile township of Calais granted to Colonel Jacob Davis and Stephen Fay, both residents of Charlton, Massachusetts.¹¹ The General Assembly at Arlington granted the Calais charter on October 21, 1780. The charter comprised 23,040 acres of land. A Vermont Act of Incorporation officially created the Town of Calais on August 15, 1781. The Calais proprietors met in Charlton, Massachusetts, in 1781. They were primarily land speculators who obtained the charters and sold lots to settlers, and they often divided the land “with no knowledge of the topographic character of the town.”¹²

The charter members charged Colonel Jacob Davis with surveying the 1st Division of Calais in 1783. Davis, accompanied by Captain Samuel Robinson (1742-1827) and a Mr. Brush from Bennington, “found their way to Calais with their necessary stores, and after running four lines on the north side of the first division, they abandoned the survey.”¹³ During the summer of 1786, Captain Robinson and E. Waters, J. Tucker, E. Stone, and General Parley Davis returned to complete the 1st and 2nd Divisions survey.¹⁴

Moses Haskell (1762-1836), considered the first Calais settler, “felled the first tree in 1787.”¹⁵ Francis West, Abijah Wheelock (1764-1846), Asa Wheelock (1741-1806), and Peter Wheelock (1750-1820) soon followed, preparing the land for settlement.

Colonel Davis, a principal proprietor in the grants of both Montpelier and Calais, reportedly named the towns. The colonel “become prejudiced against the custom, so common among the settlers, of giving the name of the old home to the new.”¹⁶ With his choice of Calais and Montpelier, Davis reflected the nation’s gratitude towards France and its assistance during the American Revolution (1775-1783). During the first half of the nineteenth century, the

¹¹ Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District Calais, Washington County, Vermont*. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2006, p.2.

¹² *Ibid*, p.3.

¹³ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Washington County, for 1783-1889*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Journal Office, 1889, p.229.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.229.

¹⁵ Waite, Marcus Warren. *Pioneers of the Town of Calais, Vermont*. Montpelier, VT: Vermont Historical Society, 1932, pg.1-27.

¹⁶ Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.2.

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town of Calais grew steadily in population to form the unincorporated villages of Adamant, East Calais, North Calais, Kents Corner, Maple Corner, and Pekin.

Colonel Caleb Curtis (1770-1836) was the first settler of the Maple Corner area, settling at the head of Curtis Pond around 1797. In addition to Lot #48 of the First Division, which comprised present-day Maple Corner, Curtis also owned the majority of Lot #32 of the First Division and Lot #30 of the Third Division. Curtis was a prominent member of Calais' affairs. He held civil and military offices and was a promoter of the town's education and religion. He was a contributor to establishing the Union meeting house built in western Calais.¹⁷ Four of his seven daughters married four of the seven Kent brothers: Polly married Ira Kent, Fanny married Abdiel Kent, Laura married John Van Rensselaer Kent (1813-1892), and Minerva married Ezekiel Kent. The Bliss, Curtis, Kent, Robinson, and Wheelock families were Kents Corners and Maple Corner's social nucleus.¹⁸

In the first decades of settlement, the population increased nearly tenfold from 1790 with just 43 residents to 1800 with 443 people.¹⁹ By 1800 Calais grew to 443 inhabitants living in 74 dwellings; the most considerable families were the Bliss Family, with eight farms, and the Wheelock Family. In 1801, there were 80 taxed individuals, with 1,679 acres of improved land and \$182 worth of houses. By 1830, the town taxed 252 people who owned 3,690 acres of land valued at \$1,559 and 541 houses/lots valued at \$1,401. There were 14 mills and stores, two medicine practitioners, one merchant, and one trader.²⁰ The population had risen to 1,709 by 1840. In the Town of Calais, by 1850, the population had dropped by almost 300 to 1,410 residents.²¹ Despite the town's decrease in residents, development and prosperity began in earnest in Maple Corner between 1850 and 1880. By the mid-nineteenth century, Vermont began to experience widespread migration to the fertile lands in the Ohio River Valley, with nearly half of the state's population moving.

Early Maple Corner Life

Maple Corner was one of the earlier settlements in Calais, with settlers arriving in the late 1700s. The village grew around the potential waterpower of Curtis Pond. A brook empties out of the pond at the southern end and runs southeasterly towards Kents Corner. There was a sawmill and gristmill in the area, built around 1817. The c.1803 Robinson Sawmill (still extant), made by Joel Robinson, was on Kent Hill Road, and the Caleb Curtiss Sawmill was at Curtis Pond, adjacent to 117 West County Road. During the mid to late nineteenth century, commercial activity focused on villages where farmers from the surrounding area could purchase or trade manufactured and dry goods. Calais had carriage makers, harness

¹⁷ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Washington County, for 1783-1889*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Journal Office, 1889, p.622.

¹⁸ Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.5.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.5.

²⁰ Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village Historic District National Register Nomination, Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.8.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.8.

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makers, machinists, tanners, marble dealers, match manufacturers, and makers of finished lumber goods, barrel headings, butter tubs, and shoe pegs in its five villages.

Kent Family

The Kent family was predominant in Maple Corner and Kents Corner during the nineteenth century. Remember Kent (1775-1855) settled in Calais with his family in the late eighteenth century and built a log cabin around Kents Corner. He acquired 80 acres in the southerly part of town, lot 46 of the first division, and later acquired part of lot 47. Remember Kent married Rachael Bliss in 1799. Rachael was the daughter of Calais pioneer Captain Abdiel Bliss (1740-1803), and she received 75 acres in lot number 50 of the first division as a gift from her father.²² By 1800, Remember Kent owned an extensive farm of more than 155 acres. Remember served as an officer in the local militia and held several business interests in Calais, including a general store, tavern, post office, livery stable, shoe shop, brick kiln, and sawmill. His obituary stated that Kent “possessed an excellent constitution, and being ever-temperate in his habits, industrious and cheerful, lived to a good old age, always in the enjoyment of good health, until a very few days before his disease.”²³

Remember and Rachel Bliss Kent had eight children between 1799 and 1817: Remember Jr., Rachel Bliss, Ira, Abdiel, George, Ezekiel, John Van Rensselaer, and Samuel Newell.

Remember's third son, Abdiel Kent (1805-1887), married Fanny Curtis in 1846. After the death of Fanny, he married Lucy A. Bliss in 1859. Abdiel Kent was a nineteenth-century industry, real estate, and farming entrepreneur. He was a successful farmer, merchant, and manufacturer with a boot and shoe shop, starch-making factory, and harness and saddlery business.²⁴

Remember's sixth son, John V. R. Kent (1813-1892), was very active in Maple Corner and

From an early life ... took an active interest in the affairs of his native town, and had held nearly every office, having been selectman, lister, constable, town agent, and justice of the peace.²⁵

John V. R. Kent lived at **HD #9**. He also was a representative in the Vermont Legislature from 1862 to 1863. Kent was

²² Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District National Register Nomination*, p.4.

²³ *The Vermont Patriot and State Gazette*, Montpelier, Vermont, June 1, 1855, p.3.

²⁴ “Kents Corner,” Agency of Commerce and Community Development State Historic Sites. <https://historicsites.vermont.gov/>. Date Accessed: November 27, 2021.

²⁵ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, Feb. 17, 1892, p. 3.

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A clear-headed man who looked sharply into matters, and his advice on all questions was much valued; indeed, he was kept busy with affairs that were entrusted to him by others, acting as a trustee, guardian, administrator, and the like. The reputation of Mr. Kent for judgment and reliability was by no means bounded by the limits of his town, he having been widely known throughout the state.²⁶

J.V.R. Kent was also an inventor. In 1882, he modified a stone boat for repairing highways. On the underside of the stone boat, he fastened a nail plate with steel teeth “which were curved forward so they will draw into the ground; and with a good team and man to ride, will dig up the high places on the side of the road.”²⁷ John Van Rensselaer Kent (1813-1892) married Laura A. Curtiss, the daughter of Caleb Curtiss. After the death of Laura in 1831, he married Catherine A. “Kate” Morse, daughter of Alpheus Bliss (1772-1838).

Maple Corner Commerce

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a man named Persons operated the blacksmith shop in Maple Corner. In 1878, he gave “up blacksmithing for the present, at least,” with J.B. Van Ornam (**HD #7, HD#8, and HD#10**) of Woodbury “taking the shop they occupied.”²⁸ Van Ornam was considered “an excellent workman in all the departments of the trade and is doubtless deserving a large patronage.”²⁹ In 1890, Jerome B. Van Ornam was “repairing the blacksmith shop.”³⁰ In 1894, H.H. Brown occupied “the blacksmith shop for general repairs and boards at William White’s.”³¹

With the advent of the automobile, it became possible for village residents and farmers from the surrounding areas to travel to Montpelier and Barre for a more comprehensive selection of goods and materials. Mass-produced materials from urban areas also became available by mail, decreasing the need for locally-produced goods. These industries gradually disappeared from the village scene.³²

Maple Corner Store

The need to buy dry goods led to the development of stores in the village.³³ There was an increased demand for finished goods ranging from dry goods to finished lumber products

²⁶ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, Feb. 17, 1892, p. 3.

²⁷ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 5, 1882, p.2.

²⁸ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 25, 1878, p.2.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.2.

³⁰ *Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vermont, September 9, 1890, p.2.

³¹ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 19, 1894, p.3.

³² Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village Historic District National Register Nomination, Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.15.

³³ *Ibid*, p.15.

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such as window sashes, blinds, and shingles. Commercial transactions in Vermont villages increasingly focused on towns where area farmers purchased or traded goods, leading to a rise in village commerce and specialty stores and services. Because Vermont remained an agriculture-based economy, these commercial and industrial enterprises remained small-scale and local in focus.

In March 1903, George Elgin Mann (1870-1953) purchased the red shop near the former sawmill and gristmills. The store offered rubber boots, gloves, mittens, horse blankets, and “a fine line of Mackinaws, Heavy Wool Shirts and Sweaters, Wool Pants, Sheep Lined Coats and in fact everything necessary to fit you for the cold weather.” He added a blacksmith’s shop, a garage, and a general store.³⁴

in 1897, there was an effort “to move the Calais post office to Maple Corner,” but at the time, the local newspaper predicted that “it will probably not be successful.”³⁵ In 1906, however, the post office moved from Kents Corners to the red shop, with Mann serving as postmaster. Mann’s store was also an entertainment site as in 1906, Mann had “a dance at his new store at Maple Corner Friday evening.”³⁶

Mann built a boathouse on Curtis Pond, where he rented out boats to visitors. He also sold camp lots along the pond. In 1906, the post office moved to Maple Corner from Kent General Store.³⁷ Mann was also the cemetery commissioner and insurance agent and provided firewood for residents. He was an early car owner, often serving as the local chauffeur and taxi. He was an active member of the Mapleville Debating Club and the Creamery Association and served as a steward for the Maple Corner Grange. The Manns owned several other properties in Calais and Maple Corner – they owned **HD#10**, **HD#11**, **HD#12**, and **HD#13** during their time in Maple Corner.

In 1925, Mann leased the building to Howard and Esther Lackey, who ran Lackey’s Store. The Lackeys previously operated a millinery store in Northfield. Mann also rented the upper floor as a tenement, which the Lackeys used for their own home. The Lackey sold various goods, including ice cream, rat bait, shoes, and gasoline.

In October 1929, Mann offered the store for sale. It was “an old established business in a good location and doing nice business; stock included general merchandise and post office.”³⁸ The Lackeys bought the store in 1930.

³⁴ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 9, 1915, p.8.

³⁵ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, March 17, 1897, p.5.

³⁶ *Daily Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, March 14, 1906, p.3.

³⁷ Jolley, Max. *The Postmasters of Vermont Burlington, VT*: Philatelic Society, 1986, pgs 1-17.

³⁸ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, October 3, 1929, p.1.

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They had a millinery shop upstairs, and this is the office and the Post Office end of it ... They sold everything in that store that you can imagine. Women's clothing, men's clothing, drugs, and whatnot. It was a great gathering place.³⁹

The Lackeys moved elsewhere and rented the upstairs apartment. In 1935, they rented the room to one of his employees, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Dailey.

In addition to the village store and post office, many people offered their farm tools, farmsteads, lakeside cottages for rent, or livestock for sale, often using Lackey's store as the point of contact. Tickets for special fundraising events such as the annual chicken pie supper. During the 1930s, the Washington County Soil Conservation Program sent its field agents throughout the county, using Lackey's Store as one of its many meeting locales. It was also a meeting spot for the Washington County Electric Cooperative.

The Adamant Cooperative voted to buy the store in 1945, opening its doors in June. The Maple Corner branch carried "a complete line of groceries, small tools, clothing, and general merchandise."⁴⁰ Clarence Fitch, manager of the Adamant store, managed the Maple Corner branch; Marian Fitch Anderson, the clerk of the Adamant store, became the assistant manager and postmaster. After an October 1947 fire destroyed the Maple Corner store, the Adamant Co-operative members voted to rebuild the store. The members then "trucked a variety of store items over to the Maple Valley Grange right away" to establish a temporary store.⁴¹ In October 1947, "measuring for a new store started," and within a week, "cement for the foundation arrived," which made things "really look rosier around Maple Corners as prospects for a fine new store outshadow this very real blow to the cooperative."⁴² They completed the new building in 1948. A resident recalled the movies held at the store:

There was the Maple Corner Community Center. They sometimes had plays. I remember they bought a projector, and once a month, they had a movie. All the movies were old movies. I remember all the movies were from World War I. I remember my dad taking us on when the roads were bad on skis for a mile and a half to see a movie. It was a wonderful life. It was great.⁴³

Maple Corner Industry

The sawmill, shingle mill, and gristmill were essential to the early development of a town, and in the case of Calais, one of the first town decrees was the granting of land for the

³⁹ Vermont Historical Society. "Green Mountain Chronicles" Oral History Transcriptions, 1981-1989 (bulk: 1987-1988) MSA 199 & 200

⁴⁰ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, July 3, 1945, p.7.

⁴¹ *Vermont Farm Bureau News*, Essex Junction, Vermont, November 1, 1947, p.2.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.2.

⁴³ LaRosa, Luke, "'Local Schools, Rural Communities: Consolidation and Community in Central Vermont.'" (2013). Holster Scholar Projects, p. 12.

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erection of mills. Calais officials offered “one hundred Spanish milled dollars and one hundred acres” to anyone who erected a gristmill or sawmill within two years.⁴⁴ In 1792, six years after the initial proposal, town proprietors offered “200 acres of land to any person who would build a corn (grist) mill and a sawmill.”⁴⁵

Sawmills contributed to the taming of the wild, pioneer land. In 1793, Jacob Davis and Samuel Twiss erected a sawmill and gristmill at Calais Center, at the falls on Dugar Brook northeast of Gospel Hollow. Davis and Twiss combined resources to acquire a water-power site and an upright saw for the mill. Proprietors located the early mills in the geographic center, later known as Calais Center.⁴⁶ Between 1791 and 1800, Calais witnessed a dramatic population increase, furthering the need for sawmills to produce finished lumber for building and gristmills to grind bulk grains, seeds, and feed crops.

Before establishing industry in Calais, settlers brought seed and grain from grist mills in settled towns to the south, Williamstown, Brookfield, and Royalton, at distances of 30 miles or more. The gristmill was essential to fledgling agrarian societies and was frequently one of

The first structures built in newly settled towns with access to a stream or river as settlers cleared forests to create farmland, turning trees into planks for housing, barns, and fences. In colonial America, town proprietors had often built both sawmills and gristmills in the early stages of establishing their town to attract settlers and meet the needs of local rural economies.⁴⁷

Grist mills and sawmills provided mechanisms for processing wheat and corn, and timber for building. These were essential elements to the success of any farmstead and new village. The gristmill spurred settlement and development in the Calais area, incentivizing farmers to move to the vicinity.

Wood shingles were a vital building product for use as both roofing and siding. Before the nineteenth century, artisans split shingles using hand tools. During the 1800s, entrepreneurs constructed water-powered shingle machines. The shingle mills were often part of an existing sawmill or gristmill operation.⁴⁸

Calais had several modest-sized water privileges on streams where citizens established mills with machinery in the first decades of settlement. Colonel Caleb Curtis (1770-1836) operated a mill in the Maple Corner vicinity between 1812 and 1827. In 1824, Calais had a

⁴⁴ Johnson, Beverly, *Untitled Manuscript*, Town of Calais, Calais Town Clerk, Calais, Vermont, 1988.

⁴⁵ Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.12.

⁴⁶ Cate, Weston A. *Forever Calais: A History of Calais, Vermont*. Calais Historical Society: Calais, Vermont, 1999, p.10.

⁴⁷ Carr, Jacqueline B. “Local History and the Vermont Borderlands, 1790-1820.” *Vermont History, Volume 84, no. 1, Winter/Spring 2016*. Vermont Historical Society: Montpelier, Vermont, p. 81.

⁴⁸ Johnson, John. *Kents Corner Historic District Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.12.

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nail factory, three grist mills, seven sawmills, two smut mills, two clover mills, two distilleries, two potashes, two trip hammer shops, a carding machine, and one store.⁴⁹ These early industries found a stable market in the settled farming community around Maple Corner.

In 1844, Abdiel Kent (1805-1887), his brother Ira, and Lewis Bancroft (HD#1) constructed a starch-making factory on Dugar Brook near Gospel Hollow. The company was known as Farmer's Starch Company. Made from potatoes, manufacturers used starch for the sizing or finishing of cloth and for making potato whiskey.⁵⁰ In 1860, the Kent and Bancroft Starch Factory operated only two months a year after the potato harvest and processed, with water power, 4,000 bushels of potatoes into 15 tons of starch worth \$1,120.⁵¹ In 1893, "indications of a new industry starting up on the site of the old starch factory, near the center of town."⁵²

Abdiel Kent (1805-1887) purchased the "red shop" and installed iron-working machinery in the building. The red shop was located on the banks of the brook immediately behind HD#12. John Robinson (HD#14) began a grist mill and machine shop in the early nineteenth century. Machinist Nathaniel W. Bancroft operated the shop. Robinson ceased operations in 1852, and four years later, he built a sawmill at Maple Corner, and "it tapered to nothing in about 15 years."⁵³ Robinson also held a patent for butter worker improvement. The machine called Swift's Improved Butter Worker removed buttermilk and added salt, "requiring so little strength that a child may work it."⁵⁴

Between 1840 and 1860, Vermont witnessed an increased demand for finished goods ranging from dry goods to finished lumber products such as building materials. Vermont farmers gravitated towards village centers to purchase or trade for goods, developing village commerce and specialty stores. Due to the rural nature of the agriculture-based economy, the villages were small-scale, especially in Calais, where there were five smaller villages rather than one town center.

In this mid-nineteenth-century period, Calais reflected a statewide pattern of commercial development with specific new businesses. During this time, carriage makers, harness makers, machinists, rake manufacturers, and makers of butter tubs all opened in Maple Corner.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Hemenway, Abby Maria, *The History of Washington County in the Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. Vermont Watchman and State Journal Press: Montpelier, 1882, p. 128.

⁵⁰ Cate, Weston A. *Forever Calais: A History of Calais, Vermont*, p.10.

⁵¹ U. S. Census of Manufacturers, 1860, Calais.

⁵² *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 1, 1893, p.1.

⁵³ Toby, James K. and Edwin E. Robinson, "Calais," *Vermont Historical Magazine*. Edited and compiled by Abby Maria Hemenway. Vermont State Watchman and Journal Press: Montpelier, Vermont, 1882, p. 128.

⁵⁴ *The Daily Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, May 31, 1865, p.3.

⁵⁵ Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village Historic District National Register Nomination, Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.9.

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John Robinson's sawmill and then Daniel A. Marble's horse rake factory were near **HD#12** in the 1870s. Daniel Albert Marble was a carpenter, and when the Civil War broke out, he joined the 1st Vermont Regiment, fighting in the Battle of Big Bethel in June 1861. After completing his nine months, Marble returned to Berlin, where the town appointed him recruiting officer, "being well versed in military drill and discipline."⁵⁶ Marble then joined Company C of the 13th Vermont Regiment. With the rank of Color Sergeant, he was severely wounded, repelling Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863.

Following the death of William C. Robinson in 1876, J.V.R. Kent handled the estate and coordinated the auctioning of the red shop (**HD#12**) and about an acre of land. At that time, the 30-foot by 50-foot shop had two stories with a basement. There were stone dams and a waterwheel, shafting, and belting. The red shop also had a planing machine, turning lathe, circular saws, mortising and boring machine, and jigsaw.⁵⁷

In 1882, the Calais mills were "good, and had the water-power has been as good, no mills in town would have done as much business; but in dry times they are without sufficient water, still, they have always done a remunerative business, and are in repair."⁵⁸ That same year, William White "rented the board and shingle mill of L.A. Kent for the coming season."⁵⁹

In 1884, Mallory Bancroft (1849-1888) lived with his father, Nathaniel Lewis Bancroft (1854-1915), at **HD#1**. Initially employed as a carpenter and a joiner, Mallory became a mechanic and the proprietor of a shingle and grist mill and carriage shop in Maple Corner. He was "in charge of the repair shop at Maple Corner" in 1886.⁶⁰ Upon his death in 1888, the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* wrote that Bancroft "was 40 years of age and unmarried. He had run the red shop at Maple Corner, used for the manufacture of shingle, and was one of the most influential and esteemed citizens."⁶¹

Leroy A. Kent (1843-1911) owned the mill property in the late nineteenth century. Born in Calais, Kent was the son of Ira and Polly Kent. Identified as L.A. Kent, he attended a commercial school in Providence, Rhode Island, and then worked in transportation in Burlington, Iowa. In 1866, he returned to Vermont, working as a merchant in a Craftsbury general store. Between 1873 and 1893, Leroy was a merchant in Calais and its postmaster. In 1887, he became a silent partner in J.H. McLoud & Company (merchants). After he married Susan Blanche Hollister (1852-1938) of Hollister Hill in Marshfield, Vermont, in

⁵⁶ *Green Mountain Freeman*, Montpelier, Vermont, August 19, 1862, p.5.

⁵⁷ *Green Mountain Freeman*, Montpelier, Vermont, March 22, 1876, p.3.

⁵⁸ Toby, James K. and Edwin E. Robinson, "Calais," *Vermont Historical Magazine*. Edited and compiled by Abby Maria Hemenway. Vermont State Watchman and Journal Press: Montpelier, Vermont, 1882, p.128.

⁵⁹ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 19, 1894, p.3.

⁶⁰ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, May 12, 1886, p.1.

⁶¹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 19, 1888, p.1.

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1875, the couple lived in Kents Corner. Leroy was a school director in Calais and representative of the Vermont General Assembly from 1882 to 1883.⁶²

In 1889, a Calais tourist came “to visit some of the picturesque lakes of that town in search of water lilies.”⁶³ The visitors arrived at the farmstead of Azro Nelson (HD#) and

After confiding our team to his care and leaving directions to prepare us lunch, we proceeded to the pond, which lies about a stone’s throw from his house. This pond, however, is not the pond proper, for upon observations proved to be the outlet of the same, dammed for the purpose of furnishing motive power to run a shingle mill close by, but was, however, quite a body of water.⁶⁴

In December 1900, Theodore Morrison “purchased of R. Dean Van Ornam the building at Maple Corner known as the old Cheese factory” and was “to open a hand working repair and paint shop.”⁶⁵ Fred Cole and Theodore Morrison “purchased the building” and made “extensive repairs.”⁶⁶ Soon after, Cole moved into Mrs. Caroline Robinson’s home (HD#13), which they rented for a year.

In 1902, Ernest Lamphere ran a business in the red shop (**HD#12**), “making butter boxes, running the grist mill, and keeps a stock of feed for sale.”⁶⁷ That same year, Walter Goodell “bought the grist mill property at Maple Corner” and was “making cider at the old red shop.”⁶⁸ He was also “doing custom work, running the grist mill”⁶⁹ During this high turnover period, L.A. Kent maintained ownership of the building.

Maple Corner Education

There were nine schoolhouses in Calais during the nineteenth century. In 1877, there were ninety pupils at the Maple Corner School (**HD#4**). The school offered boarding rooms for approximately one dollar a week. The students had “access to a large and growing library and a cabinet of minerals and curiosities, comprising several hundred specimens.”⁷⁰ In February 1879, the Maple Corner School spring term opened with “a few rooms for self-boarding” available “for very low rates.”⁷¹ The classes were held in the vestry, a “spacious hall, and every way convenient for this purpose,” and the school grounds were “the finest in

⁶² The Vermont Historical Society. *Kent Family Papers: Louise Andrews Kent Collection, 1783-2000 (Bulk: ca. 1875-1969) Doc K1-39, XMSC 113, MSB-59, Size B, C & D.* Montpelier, Vermont.

⁶³ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 17, 1889, p.4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.4.

⁶⁵ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 18, 1900.

⁶⁶ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 13, 1901, p.8.

⁶⁷ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, March 12, 1902, p.8.

⁶⁸ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont October 21, 1902; *Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vermont, October 2, 1902.

⁶⁹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 29, 1902, p.5.

⁷⁰ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 20, 1878, p.3.

⁷¹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 12, 1879, p.4.

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Washington County.”⁷² Along with the Maple Corner School, the Maple Street School was the only Calais school with two rooms.

The school occasionally hosted events for the wider community. During the spring of 1878, a series of Friday evening sociables featured the performance of the popular farce *Hiram Hideout*, the drama *Coupon Bonds*, and the spoof *The Quiet Family*. During the winter of 1878, Dr. Hiram Cutting gave a lecture titled “Wonders of the Microscope.”⁷³ The following year, Arden Martin gave a presentation on temperance. In 1879, the East Calais Dramatic Club performed the farce *Poor Pillicoddy* at the school.

There was no formal church in Maple Corner, so the school often hosted religious services for the community. In 1877, Reverend L. Warren lectured “in the new schoolhouse, in Mapleville (Calais)....”⁷⁴ In 1879, the vestry hosted Christmas exercises consisting of music, tableaux, recitations, and “a fine distribution of cornballs.”⁷⁵ The Reverends J. McNerney and L. Warren preached at the schoolhouse during the fall of 1883. In January 1898, Reverend S.C. Hayford held a meeting at the schoolhouse titled “The Mission of Christian Science.”⁷⁶ The “Spiritualists of the Town” held meetings at the schoolhouse during the summer of 1898.⁷⁷

Maple Corner Agriculture

The early nineteenth century was a period of change for farming trends in Vermont. Farms converted from producing cash crops like oats, corn, wheat, and barley to animal husbandry, specifically sheep raising. The agricultural land failed from years of improper uses during the pioneer period as they exploited the ground instead of cultivating it for future use.

Calais farms remained uniform throughout the nineteenth century because most farmers operated farms according to a system of mixed farming and home-industry agriculture. They frequently planted fields with potatoes, corn, beans, and grains, including oats, barley, and wheat. There were wide fluctuations in the production of these staples due to weather, soil quality, crop failures, personal preferences, and market conditions. Vermont farmers found competing with the Midwest’s newly settled virgin and inexpensive farmland difficult. New England farmers dealt with wheat midge, Hessian flies, and rust, pushing Vermont farmers to turn to the profit-making venture of sheep raising for wool production and stockbreeding.⁷⁸ This change from sustenance to commercial farming was related to

⁷² *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 12, 1877, p.4.

⁷³ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 25, 1878, p.2.

⁷⁴ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 10, 1877, p.3.

⁷⁵ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 31, 1879, p.4.

⁷⁶ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, January 5, 1898, p.5.

⁷⁷ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 13, 1898, p.3.

⁷⁸ Wilson, Harold Fisher. *The Hill Country of Northern New England, Its Social and Economic History, 1790-1930*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1936, pgs. 1-455.

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several events: the import of Merino sheep to Vermont in 1811, the 1824 plague of wheat rust, and Vermont's implementation of favorable wool tariffs in 1824 and 1828.

William Jarvis of Weathersfield, Vermont, served as the United States Consul to Lisbon and imported the first significant number of Merino sheep to Vermont. Jarvis returned to Vermont with 400 sheep. He saw the state as an ideal location "because of its treeless hills, denuded by the pioneers' need for firewood, building materials, and lumber for the potash markets."⁷⁹ The rocky soil was better suited for pasture grazing than growing wheat and corn. A famous tale in New England was that sheep flourished in Vermont, for they had appropriately lengthy noses, "sharpened by nature," to get between the rocks strewn the countryside.⁸⁰

People prized Merino sheep for their long, soft wool, and the animals' grazing style was ideal for the rolling hills of Vermont. Merinos spread across the state, and "the lengthy fleeces of these breeds offered a quality of wool that precisely met the needs of the increasing number of woolen mills, especially those producing high-grade yarn and cloth."⁸¹ Over time, Vermonters perfected the sheep breed. Between 1812 and 1865, the weight of fleece compared to the total weight of the sheep expanded from 6% to 21%.

In 1842, Calais' farm livestock consisted mainly of sheep (5,409), cattle (2,919), swine (666), and horses (252). Grain production consisted of bushels of oats (18,473), Indian corn (5,089), wheat (3,630), buckwheat (1,394), rye (578), and barley (152). Other farm products included maple sugar (24,420 pounds), potatoes (24,246), wool (14,160 pounds), and hay (5,899 tons).⁸²

The Calais farms of the 1850s were self-sustaining, often having orchards, hundreds of sheep, broad grain fields, shaded trees, cattle barns, and sheep barns. They had a diversified farming operation. Farmers improved their land (tilled, pasture, orchard, and mowings) and had "unimproved" woodland. During this time, sheep raising was the dominant agricultural activity, but Calais remained ideal for fruit trees and dairying. The farms produced butter, cheese, maple sugar, and wool. Vermont farmers grew potatoes, corn, oats, peas, beans, apples, wheat, rye, barley, and buckwheat. Farmers used horses and oxen to accomplish their work and had a relatively small herd of dairy cows. There were a few swine to use for lard and meat.

By 1850, there were 157 Calais farms with an average of 119 acres that supported more milk cows and horses and fewer sheep, cattle, and hogs. In 1849, these farms produced butter (97,780 pounds) and cheese (63,065 pounds).

⁷⁹ Balivet, Robert F. *Vermont History*. v. 33, No. 1, Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, January 1965.

⁸⁰ Wilson, Harold Fisher. *The Hill Country of Northern New England, Its Social and Economic History, 1790-1930*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1936.

⁸¹ Russell, Howard S. *A Long Deep Furrow, Three Centuries of Farming in New England*. University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1982.

⁸² Thompson, Zadock. *Gazetteer of the State of Vermont*. Montpelier: Walton, 1824.

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In 1850, the John Robinson farm (**HD#14**) consisted of 100 acres of improved land and 35 acres of unimproved land. The farm livestock consisted of two horses, 12 cows, two oxen, six cattle, and four pigs. The land yielded 12 bushels of wheat, 75 bushels of corn, 125 oats, and 200 bushels of potatoes. The cows produced 1000 pounds of butter and 800 pounds of cheese. The Robinsons made 375 pounds of maple sugar. He was a manager for the Washington County Agricultural Society. At the 1849 fair, the society awarded Robinson for his wheat production. Robinson achieved excellent results by burning the timber and using the ashes as a fertilizer.⁸³

The Mower farm (**HD#1**) won recognition for Durham Bulls, broodmares, cows, heifers, and colts at the Washington County Agricultural Fair throughout the nineteenth century. Mower's three-year-old Durham bull was the first premium at the Vermont State Fair in 1856. Mower also had a large sheep herd.

In 1869, John Van Rensselaer Kent (**HD#9**) "bought the farm at Maple Corner owned by Alonzo Taylor, of New York."⁸⁴ Taylor sold his personal property at a public auction. The items included "horses, carriages, harnesses, hay, grain, stock, etc.," and the auction was the "largest public sale held in Calais for years."⁸⁵ The John Van Rensselaer Kent farm had seventy acres of improved land and 25 acres of woodland in 1869. They had four horses, five cows, seven cattle, and five sheep. The farm produced 20 bushels of wheat, 150 bushels of oats, 125 bushels of corn, one bushel of buckwheat, and 75 bushels of potatoes. The sheep produced 25 pounds of wool, and the cows produced 1500 pounds of butter. Their sugarbush produced 2000 pounds of maple sugar. The farm yielded \$1942. Ten years earlier, Kent claimed high honors for the best sour peck apples and best squashes at the first annual fair of the Calais Farmers' and Mechanics' Club. His wife received recognition for the best bouquet of natural flowers.

In 1873, Lewis Bancroft (**HD#1**),

Sowed one-half acre of Western corn to feed his cows when green, but the season being wet, his pasturage was good, and he did not use it till winter when he fed it to his stock with other fodder; he kept twenty-one head eighteen days on it, and his cows increased their flow of milk, and his other cattle thrive on it. That half acre would have kept one animal for 378 days.⁸⁶

As Lewis Bancroft operated a larger farm to the north, he may have leased **HD#1** to James Kelton Toby (1845-1883) during the nineteenth century. Toby was the son of Richard W. Toby, who was "was a farmer, hotel-keeper, and mill-owner in Calais, East Montpelier, and

⁸³ *Green Mountain Freeman*, Montpelier, Vermont, January 11, 1849, p.4.

⁸⁴ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 17, 1892, p.3.

⁸⁵ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 11, 1869, p.2.

⁸⁶ *Rutland Daily Globe*, Rutland, Vermont, December 29, 1873, p.4.

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Walden, Vt., Royalton, N. Y., and Absecon, N. J.”⁸⁷ Toby was born in Calais, June 17, 1845. He received his education in the common schools and at the Union School of Montpelier. Toby was a land surveyor and school teacher. He married Cherrill Robinson, the granddaughter of Joel Robinson.⁸⁸ They lived with their three daughters, and “she [Cherrill] raised her children to young womanhood.”⁸⁹ James Kelton Toby was a democrat, served as town representative in 1874, and was Secretary of the state Grange. Following the death of James K. Toby in 1883, the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* reported:

Calais loses one of its worthiest citizens. His superior merits secured for him very early in life an honorable position among the townsmen, and there are very few in any community who, dying at the age of 37, would receive from their acquaintances of all classes and parties so unqualified praise for intelligence, sound judgment, fidelity, integrity, and public spirit, as is spontaneously accorded to him on every hand.⁹⁰

The 1869 Toby farm (**HD#1**) had 33 acres of improved farmland with ten acres of woodlot, with the farmland valued at \$1600. The Toby farm had one horse, four cows, and one pig. During the 1870 season, the farm produced 11 bushels of wheat, 70 bushels of corn, 30 bushels of oats, and 50 bushels of potatoes. The four cows produced 700 pounds of butter.⁹¹ Toby grew seeds for B.K. Bliss and Son in New York. Bliss produced an annual catalog that contained “a list of the best known and most popular varieties of garden, field and flower seeds, selected from our large assortment of nearly three thousand varieties, with brief directions for their culture.”⁹²

During the 1869 season, the L.A. Kent farm (**HD#8**) consisted of four acres with one cow and one pig. The farm produced ten acres of corn and 60 bushels of potatoes. The single cow produced 150 pounds of butter.⁹³ The William Cummings Robinson farm (**HD#13**) consisted of 20 acres with five acres of woodland. The Robinson farm had two horses and one cow. During the season, the farm produced forty bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of corn, 300 bushels of oats, ten bushels of buckwheat, and 40 bushels of potatoes. The cows had 150 pounds of butter. The farm made \$207 in 1870.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Toby, James K. and Edwin E. Robinson, “Calais,” *Vermont Historical Magazine*.

⁸⁸ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Washington County, for 1783-1889*, p. 631.

⁸⁹ *Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vermont, December 4, 1933, p.10.

⁹⁰ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, April 25, 1883, p.5.

⁹¹ Agricultural Census of 1870, Calais, Washington County, Vermont. University of Vermont Special Collections, Burlington, Vermont

⁹² Bliss, B.K. *B.K. Bliss & Sons' abridged catalogue and gardeners' almanac for 1874: containing a list of the best known and most popular varieties of garden, field and flower seeds, selected from out large assortment of nearly three thousand varieties, with brief directions for their culture*. New York, N.Y.: B.K. Bliss & Sons, 1874.

⁹³ Agricultural Census of 1870, Calais, Washington County, Vermont. University of Vermont Special Collections, Burlington, Vermont.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

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In 1874, the Nelson farm (**HD#14**) “raised 87½ bushels of wheat from four bushels of seed last year. This year he has raised fifty bushels from sowing three. He sows two bushels to the acre. He didn’t think it needful to ‘go west.’”⁹⁵ In 1889, Nelson improved “his barn at Maple Corner.”⁹⁶

In 1879, the Toby farm (**HD#1**) consisted of 30 acres of tilled land, five meadows/pastures/orchards, and 12 acres of woodland. The tilled land produced 25 tons of hay, 40 bushels of corn, and 180 bushels of potatoes. It had two horses, five cows, two cattle, and five cows. The farm sold 23 sheep. The cows produced 923 gallons of milk and 450 pounds of butter. The 13 chickens yielded 90 dozen eggs. The Toby farm had three acres containing 100 apple trees, producing 30 bushels of apples in 1879.

The Kent farm (**HD#9**) produced \$765 in products. The farm produced 18 tons of hay, 80 bushels of corn, and 200 bushels of corn. The farm had three horses, six cows, six cattle, 14 pigs, and 45 sheep. The cows produced 1369 gallons of milk and 730 pounds of butter. Their 45 sheep yielded 270 pounds of wool, and their 12 chickens produced 60 dozen eggs. The Kent sugarbush contributed 350 pounds of maple sugar. The farm also made 70 gallons of molasses. The apple orchard produced 100 bushels of apples.

In 1879, William White (**HD#10**) had 30 acres of tilled land, 60 acres of pastures and orchards, and 30 acres of woodland. White paid \$100 for 18 weeks of farm labor. They were two horses, two working oxen, two pigs, 12 chickens, and three milch cows. He bought four heads of cattle, sold three heads, and slaughtered one. The farm produced 32 tons of hay, two bushels of grass seed, 35 bushels of buckwheat, 40 bushels of corn, 181 bushels of oats, two bushels of beans, and 200 bushels of potatoes. The farm sold 715 gallons of milk and made 800 pounds of butter. The farm dropped 30 lambs, sold 21 sheep, slaughtered one sheep, and one died of disease. White clipped 47 sheep to produce 282 pounds of wool. The chickens made 75 dozen eggs. The sugarbush produced 450 pounds of maple sugar. In 1883, the William White farm had six Jersey cows, 12 head swine, 56 sheep, 300 maple sugar trees, and 100 apple trees.⁹⁷ When William White left Calais in 1894, White disposed “of his effects” at a public auction. The auctioned goods included “good cows, Jerseys and grade horses, sheep, farming tools, household furniture, and growing crops.”⁹⁸

In 1884, Nathaniel Lewis Bancroft (1854-1915) had 12 cows, 10 head of young cattle, 400 sugar trees, and 100 apple trees. ⁹⁹ In March 1885, N.L. Bancroft (**HD#9**) was “to sell at auction at his place at Calais ... seven new milch and one farrow cow. These cows are all of good age, in good condition, and only sold because short of hay.”¹⁰⁰ That same year, A.P.

⁹⁵ *Vermont Farmer*, Newport, Vermont, November 6, 1874, p.3.

⁹⁶ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, June 5, 1889, p.1.

⁹⁷ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer Of Washington County, Vt. 1783-1899*, p.631.

⁹⁸ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, August 8, 1894, p.3.

⁹⁹ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer Of Washington County, Vt. 1783-1899*, p.630.

¹⁰⁰ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, March 18, 1885, p.1.

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Slayton “threshed one hundred twenty bushels of oats last week for N.L. Bancroft, three hours.”¹⁰¹ In April 1887, a fire destroyed his maple syrup evaporator. He left the apparatus alone during the sugaring process.¹⁰²

A severe drought impacted Calais during the summer of 1884, and “feed is very short in pastures, and most farmers are feeding their cows hay or meal or both.”¹⁰³ Despite the rain shortage, “the apple crop promises to be good, and most grain and other crops are looking fairly.”¹⁰⁴ In 1884, Azro Nelson (**HD#14**) had 25 acres with 75 apple trees and 300 Maple trees. In 1884, Charles V. Kent (**HD#9**) had seven full-blood Jersey cows, 18 horses, 1,100 sugar trees, and 50 apple trees.

Charles V. Kent also owned the stock Morgan horses "Autocrat," "Van Franklin Standard No. 6,120," and "C. H. Briggs," full brother to No. 6,120.¹⁰⁵ The Morgan Horse was famous amongst Vermonters for effectively pulling plows on the fields and pulling carriages for transportation. They were intelligent and obedient horses, and the Vermont cavalry favored the Morgan during the American Civil War. As farmers recognized the Morgan horse for its “strength, endurance, and easy-keeping qualities,” they began breeding them as they were “widely respected for his prepotency (the ability to pass his looks and qualities on to succeeding generations).”¹⁰⁶ Albion Mower (**HD#1**) also had two stock horses – “Morgan” and “General Stannard.”¹⁰⁷ In 1893, Mower sold a Columbus Morgan horse, a “great sire for trotters and pacers.”¹⁰⁸ Charles V. Kent (**HD#9**) was a horse breeder and an officer of the Morgan Horse Club.

In October 1889, Captain Albion J. Mower (A.J. Mower) “bought the N.L. Bancroft farm and the hay cut there the past season. This purchase makes him the largest real estate owner in town.”¹⁰⁹ Mower owned two large homesteads to the north of the district. His farms encompassed 400 acres and had ten cows, 26 young cattle, 50 sheep, 11 horses, 1,500 maple trees, and 200 apple trees.¹¹⁰ In November 1889, Mower took “possession of his farm lately purchased of A.C. Bliss.”¹¹¹ Bliss handled the transaction for Bancroft. Mower “paid about \$15 per acre for N.L. Bancroft Farm.”¹¹² Captain Albion Jabez Mower (1828-1898) was the son of Jabez Mower (1787-1871) and Ruth Wheelock. A.J. Mower attended Norwich University in 1848. In June 1862, Captain Mower served as the recruiting officer

¹⁰¹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, September 30, 1885, p.1.

¹⁰² *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, April 20, 1887, p.1.

¹⁰³ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 16, 1884, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer of Washington County, Vt. 1783-1899*, p.620.

¹⁰⁶ “American Morgan Horse.” International Museum of the Horse Website, Lexington, Kentucky. Date accessed: February 27, 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer of Washington County, Vt. 1783-1899*, p.628.

¹⁰⁸ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, June 14, 1893, p.7.

¹⁰⁹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 23, 1889, p.5.

¹¹⁰ Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer of Washington County, Vt. 1783-1899*, p.629.

¹¹¹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 27, 1889, p.9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

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for the 9th Vermont Regiment. Upon formation, Colonel Stannard made him Captain of Company I. He married Relief W. Smith (1838-1903) in 1867.

Maple Corner farmers utilized the surrounding forest for timber, orchards, and maple sugar. Maple sugar was considered one of the state's earliest commercial exports. Maple sugaring was an operation the settlers learned from native populations, and Vermont was famous for the quality and output of the product. Maple sugaring was the Vermont farmer's first crop of the year, as it was gathered and processed during the spring thaw before planting field crops. After the farmers extracted the sap from the tapped trees, they boiled it down to sugar or syrup. It was often processed outdoors in a large kettle over an open fire. Apple trees thrived in the Vermont climate, and much of the state's soil was conducive to raising apples. Also, the apple was a hardy fruit and easy to ship. According to *the Agricultural Resources of Vermont Multiple Property Form*:

Apple trees were grown on the earliest farms in Vermont. Immigrants from southern New England brought young seedlings and found the trees adapted well to Vermont's soil and climate. The traveling apple salesman was a familiar sight in early nineteenth-century Vermont, and the large variety of apple types during this period was largely attributed to these salesmen. By the early nineteenth century, most, if not all, farms had at least one apple tree to supplement the family diet, and there are records of small eighteenth-century pear and apple orchards in Bennington County and the lower Champlain and Connecticut River Valleys.¹¹³

Farmers headed into the timber lot during the winter to cut logs for firewood and lumber. In his book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*, historian Thomas Hubka described the New England farmer as the "summer farmer and winter woodsman."¹¹⁴ During the winter of 1884, Calais farmers "generally have improved the fine weather in cutting their supply of wood for next year."¹¹⁵ The woodlot was central to the Vermont farm as farmers spent most of their winters in the woods, cutting timber for the local sawmill and cordwood for the stoves of family and neighbors. Maple sugarbushes were also very important on a farm.

As the sheep boom deflated, dairy farming increased in Vermont due to the growing demand for dairy products in the urban centers of southern New England, the advent of the railroad, and the invention of the iced butter car in 1854. Following the Civil War, the railroad expansion to the American west "successfully eroded Vermont's advantage of proximity to East Coast grain, meat, and wool markets. Farmers slowly shifted their

¹¹³ Gilbertson, Elsa and Suzanne Jamele, *Agricultural Resources of Vermont Multiple Property Form*, p 5.

¹¹⁴ Hubka, Thomas C. *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*.

¹¹⁵ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, December 17, 1884, p.5.

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emphasis from sheep to more profitable dairy cattle and small-scale diversified farming.”¹¹⁶

Farms had always maintained a small dairy herd for their butter, cheese, and milk, but now Vermont farms were entering an era when dairying was the dominant output form. While most farms had cattle in 1850, dairying had not yet become a commercial enterprise. The big difference was the focus on purebred cows, such as Jerseys and Holsteins, which produced better milk than the mixed breeds.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, farms focused more exclusively on dairying as their primary agricultural activity, particularly as the trend towards fluid milk production developed. As Calais entered the twentieth century, the town shared a farming narrative shared by towns throughout Vermont and New England. The rocky and infertile land and the hardscrabble subsistence farming led “to widespread farm abandonment in preference for Midwestern prairie lands.”¹¹⁷ While the soil contributed to the decline, the sheer size of Midwestern farms made it difficult for smaller Vermont farms to maintain a competitive edge.

Maple Corner Cheese Factory and Creamery (HD#7)

In February 1877, the *Green Mountain Freeman* reported, “Calais is to have a cheese factory the coming season, located at Maple Corner, at least, that is the talk now.”¹¹⁸ The *Argus and Patriot* said, “the chance for a cheese factory in town are very good, the requisite number of 200 cows having been subscribed.”¹¹⁹ In 1879, the farms produced much more butter (205,440 pounds) and less cheese (7,900 pounds) than produced in 1849. In 1893, the “leading specialty among the farmers of Calais, VT, is making butter. Most of them have been very successful.”¹²⁰ Marcus Peck of Brookfield established a cheese factory directly opposite the house of J.V.R. Kent (**HD#9**). Marcus Peck (1834-1905) initially taught school in Brookfield and surrounding towns. Then he sold

Hay forks, which he continued to do until he took over the management of the "Fork Shop" under the name of Peck, Clark & Co. He later added the manufacture of rakes, hoes, and cant hooks ... In the latter part of his life, he became the owner of several farms in surrounding towns, where he spent much of his time.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village Historic District National Register Nomination, Calais, Washington County, Vermont*, p.10.

¹¹⁷ Bell, Michael M. *Did New England Go Downhill?* *Geographical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4. October 1989.

¹¹⁸ *Green Mountain Freeman*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 14, 1877, p.3.

¹¹⁹ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 21, 1877, p.3.

¹²⁰ *New England Farmer*, Boston, Massachusetts, December 16, 1893.

¹²¹ Brookfield Historical Society. *The History of Brookfield, Vermont* (Brookfield, Vt.: The Society, 1987)

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Peck owned several different cheese factories throughout the State. The Maple Corner cheese factory served a large area with Woodbury's "S.W. Benjamin, A.H. Holt, and S.H. Foster are carrying their milk to the cheese factory at Maple Corner."¹²²

In 1895, Van Ornam purchased the old cheese factory (**HD#7**) from J.V.R. Kent. J.E. Stoddard of East Montpelier "rented the cheese factory at Maple Corner" and opened a carriage paint shop."¹²³ Stoddard boarded at the Van Ornam house. Fred Clark was an assistant in the shop.¹²⁴ In 1904, the Creamery Association "voted to buy the so-called cheese factory building at Maple Corner, and the machinery will soon be moved there."¹²⁵ This building was a skimming station for local farmers. Farmers kept the skim milk to feed their pigs. The Tabor building in North Calais also served as an operator-skinning station. R. Dean Van Ornam purchased the creamery in 1913. In 1914, Charlie Andrews of Montpelier opened a carriage paint shop in the old creamery building.

Maple Corner Grange

Founded in 1867, the Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, advanced agriculture methods and promoted farmers' social and economic needs. The financial crisis of 1873, along with falling crop prices, increases in railroad fees to ship crops, and the United States Government's reduction of paper money in favor of gold and silver, devastated farmers' livelihoods and caused a surge in Grange membership in the mid-1870s.¹²⁶

The first Subordinate Grange in New England was in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1871. The Vermont Grange chapters "served an important social and educational function on the state and particularly the local levels ...Four years after its founding in 1871, the number of Subordinate Granges in Vermont had risen to 160 with approximately 6,300 members."¹²⁷

In November 1903, W.L. Drew of Hardwick came to Calais to help organize a Maple Corner Grange with approximately 65 members. Maple Valley Grange #470 purchased a new building (**HD#3**) on January 25, 1921, for \$175. In 2013, a Maple Corner resident recalled the Grange:

There was the Grange Hall. The Grange was a big thing back then. My gram was one of the charter members of the Grange in Maple Corner, so there were things like that. In the winter, they would show movies, old movies, which was local entertainment, and that was a very good thing to go to. ¹²⁸

¹²² *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, June 19, 1878, p.2.

¹²³ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, January 9, 1895, p.2.

¹²⁴ *Woodbury Herald*, Woodbury, Vermont, March 6, 1897, p.3.

¹²⁵ *Daily Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 6, 1904, p.3.

¹²⁶ "The Grange Movement, 1875," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Accessed, October 27, 2018.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ LaRosa, Luke, "'Local Schools, Rural Communities: Consolidation and Community in Central Vermont.'" (2013). Holster Scholar Projects. 12.

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The charter officers were Master I.G. Robinson, Overseer V.B. Persons, Lecturer Addie Noyes, Steward Elgin Mower, Assistant Steward Rome Van Ornam, Chaplain W.W. Noyes, Treasurer T.I. Lamphere, Secretary Blanche Loan, and Gate Keeper Dean Van Ornam.

In September 1920, the Maple Valley Grange voted to inquire about buying a store in Gospel Hollow. In January 1921, the Grange voted to purchase the building for \$175 and hired Hector A. Wheelock to dismantle the structure. Wheelock, Ed Lamphere, and Bert Britton re-erected the building at its present site during the summer of 1921. The Grange enlarged the building by twelve feet to accommodate a stage and kitchen a year later. The official dedication was on August 28, 1923.

At a September 1929 meeting at the Maple Corner Grange, farmers and the chamber of commerce agreed to secure an electricity line for the area farmers. Montpelier's mayor, Edward Devitt, addressed the meeting about improving the area's secondary lines, thereby improving the transportation routes between the farms and the trunk lines. In 1936, Merton Lyndes of Plainfield spoke about farm loans and credits at the Grange. The 4-H club frequently used the Grange for activities. Edith Bancroft of the Betsy Ross 4-H Club of Maple Corner demonstrated "table setting" at the 1936 Waitsfield Fair. The Good Worker's 4-H Club's Hartland Bancroft participated in dairy judging contests. The two clubs took trips to county and state camps, project trips, and dairy judging tours. In April 1936, the Good Worker's Club participated in a county-wide program where regional 4-H clubs planted approximately 5000 white pine and white spruce trees on Arbor Day.¹²⁹

Maple Corner Music and Cultural Activities

Maple Corner was the center for many cultural activities. There was a tradition of music in Calais. In East Calais, several dance halls were located within its confines, while the village was the home of noted fiddler Forrest Alvin "Strad" Gray. Barney's Hall was known for its late-night dances in Adamant, and the town eventually became home to the Adamant Music School. In North Calais, "Jason Marsh's son George was an instrument maker and dance master, and the McKnight family were accomplished musicians and dancers. Residents enjoyed the violin dance music of the Harvest Dance, the Sugaring Party, and the Calais and Woodbury Coronet Band played march music."¹³⁰ Like other Calais villages, Maple Corner was home to music and dance halls.

A Massachusetts native and cooper by trade, Dwight Marsh (1793-1886) lived in Maple Corner with his wife, Lydia Robinson (1797-1860). He purchased **HD#13** in 1847. His father, Jason Marsh (1770-1850), bought a Calais sawmill and gristmill around 1800. Dwight Marsh operated this mill with his father for several years before starting his mill in Maple Corner. A talented violinist and fiddler, Marsh was a musician during the War of

¹²⁹ *Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vermont, April 25, 1936, p.16.

¹³⁰ Jamele, Suzanne, *North Calais Village National Register District*, p.15.

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1812. Later in life, he performed for functions throughout the town and was a music teacher. At the Worcester July 4th celebrations in 1850, Marsh provided “excellent” music accompaniment for a student parade.¹³¹ In November 1871, approximately forty people attended a housewarming party for East Montpelier’s Joel T. Ormsbee. Marsh, “of old-time dancing notoriety,” furnished musical services “in a large chamber.”¹³² In April 1873, Marsh, “who fifty years ago made excellent music for dancing,” spent a few days in Wolcott where “some who had been his pupils, wishing to revive old memories” attended a concert in Pike’s Hall and “pronounced the music the best they have danced after for years.”¹³³ The following week, Marsh performed in the Morrisville town hall, and the Marsh “played upon a fiddle two hundred and fifty-two years old; the style of dancing was old; the ballroom was old, and everything considered there was a ‘high old time.’”¹³⁴ In 1882, Marsh played “upon a violin manufactured in the early part of the seventeenth century” at the Nelson family reunion in Middlesex, and his “magic tunes elicited much admiration from all.”¹³⁵ As an 84-year-old, “the years do not seem to affect Dwight Marsh a great deal,” as the “Sturdy old Democrat” was still “handling the bow and fingering the strings of the violin just as deftly as if a score years less than the 84 he has lived had passed over his head.”¹³⁶ In 1880, the 86-year-old Marsh married his wife, Ann Nichols, thirty years his youth. As a 90-year-old in 1883, Marsh was “quite lively,” and he claimed, “he can fiddle just as well as ever.”¹³⁷

During the 1870s, the Cresco Society of Maple Corner gave lyceums that could “afford much benefit as well as amusement to those engaged in them.”¹³⁸ These most likely occurred at the schoolhouse (**HD#4**). In 1876, a quartet from Dr. Eggleston’s church in Brooklyn, New York, “has kindly consented to give musical entertainment at the Christian church.”¹³⁹ Due to the rising number of tourists, it was “proposed to open a boarding house at the red shop, clear out the mineral spring, and make a good thing of it.”¹⁴⁰ In 1878, Maple Corner hosted “the second of a series of sociables” with a program consisting of music, tableaux, recitations, etc. To conclude with the popular farce, Hiram Hideout.”¹⁴¹ In 1884, the “little folks of Maple Corner gave a dramatic entertainment ... entitled the “Fairies of the Fountain” giving satisfaction to an appreciative audience.”¹⁴²

The Grange (**HD#3**) was a site of many different community events, including a wildflower exhibit and contest, whist parties, maple sugar festivals, spelling contests, anniversary parties, showers, and motion picture showings. The Maple Corner Home Demonstration

¹³¹ *Vermont Christian Messenger*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 17, 1850.

¹³² *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, November 23, 1871, p.2.

¹³³ *Lamoille Newsdealer*, Hyde Park, Vermont, April 16, 1873, p.3.

¹³⁴ *News and Citizen*, Morrisville, Vermont, April 24, 1873.

¹³⁵ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, September 13, 1882, p.2.

¹³⁶ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, April 24, 1878, p.4.

¹³⁷ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 17, 1883, p.3.

¹³⁸ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, April 9, 1874, p.3.

¹³⁹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, August 23, 1876, p.3.

¹⁴⁰ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, August 2, 1876, p.3.

¹⁴¹ *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 27, 1878, p.1.

¹⁴² *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Montpelier, Vermont, October 8, 1884, p.4.

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Group, Maple Corner Dramatic Club, Octagon Sewing Circle of Maple Corners, Washington Northeast School Association, Ladies Home Mission, 4-H Club, Children's Aid Society, the Washington County Folk Dance, and Country Dance group frequently used the Grange for activities.

Van Ornam Family

Maple Corner's most significant musical source was the Van Ornam family. Jerome Van Ornam (1848-1937) was born in Barre in 1848. Jerome Van Ornam married Lucy Ann Osgood (1853-1925) of Woodbury in 1873. They had six children together - Royal Dean Van Ornam (1874-1943), Lucy Belle Van Ornam (1877-1931), Jerome "Rome" Bertrand Van Orman Jr (1878-1965), Roswell "Ros" Corlis Van Ornam (1880-1946), John Chrysostom Van Ornam (1885-1940), Mary Frances Van Ornam (1894-1981).

The Van Ornam family (**HD#6**) was musically talented. The family orchestra played events and dances throughout the region. Roman Van Ornam maintained a diary that featured many music-related entries in 1894:

...played at East Montpelier for a whist party," "had dancing school at the hall, not many out as it is was such a bad night," "played at North Calais, I danced once with Daisy Chace," "did not do much of anything, only play on my violin," "got ready to go to the stone cutters at North Calais, but it was so stormy that the Montpelier band could not get so," "there was a dance at the schoolhouse in the eve for the benefit of the singing school ... furnished them a little music for same. Had a good time" and "played for the spiritualist meeting."¹⁴³

Dances were a common occurrence across Vermont in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Live music occurred regularly and provided a social highlight for singles and married couples. New England had a long dance history, mixing traditional European dances with newer ones. Farmhouses hosted kitchen junkets or tunks where a fiddler and a caller served as the centerpiece for dancing, games, and refreshments. Barns, halls, inns, and pavilions also hosted commercial dances. Dances often served as fund-raisers for community groups, and balls and dances were significant events in town-wide celebrations.

The Van Ornam family was "made of music and -played about every instrument. They were born entertainers."¹⁴⁴ In October 1898, the Van Ornam Orchestra provided music for a social dance at Memorial Hall in North Calais. The following month, the orchestra played a cotillion dance in East Montpelier. In February 1902, the Van Ornam parents "entertained 50 of their friends at their home ... the band was present and contributed to the enjoyment of the evening."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Rome Van Ornam Diaries, Vermont Historical Society, Leahy Library, Barre, Vermont.

¹⁴⁴ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, August 31, 1955, p.8.

¹⁴⁵ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 11, 1902, p.2.

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Jerome "Rome" Bertrand Van Orman Jr (1878-1965) played the violin and fiddle. Supplementing his various music commitments, Rome worked as a paper hanger and painter. He offered interior and exterior painting services and furniture and carriage painting. He also mowed and hayed for various people in Calais. According to a 1949 article, Rome was

Once a sign-painter and carriage striper. Sign painting he learned through an apprenticeship of two years, during which time he was paid fifty cents a day and boarded himself. He has done most of the post office signs in the Calais region of Vermont. He and his brother used to play the fiddle and organ for country dances and other social events. Now Rome spends considerable time decorating furniture.¹⁴⁶

The orchestra primarily was a five-piece band, but the band sometimes expanded to six people. Family members sometimes performed in duos or trios for various regional functions. In 1903, Rome and pianist Lula Bancroft performed at a Relief Corps cotillion at Calais' Memorial Hall. John C. Van Ornam (1885-1940) played the bass viola for the orchestra. He replaced Nathaniel Bancroft as the stage driver on the Montpelier-Calais route. At a February 1901 whist part in Horn of the Moon, "three Van Ornam brothers from Calais furnished music for dancing."¹⁴⁷ Roswell Van Ornam spent his youth in Calais, playing with the family band. He worked at Lafley's Mill in Calais, and in 1901, he lost two fingers during a shop accident. He then drove the Worcester-Calais stage for many years. In 1909, he married Mary McGrail, a teacher in East Calais. He then lived in Springfield, Vermont, where he worked for the Fellows Gear Shifter Shop.

Calais and Tourism

While the advent of the railroad greatly expanded opportunities for local industries, offering a means to transport goods to markets in larger cities, it also allowed people to visit the state. Vermont tourism grew as the notion of leisure time coincided with the country's opening by the railroad. The new middle class could afford the less costly means of travel by train. The number of tourists increased as Americans sought to relieve the stress brought by urban living and working.

During the late nineteenth century, the railroad companies ran promotional campaigns that targeted potential Vermont tourists, with the railroad being the conduit for people to escape the summer's urban conditions. The Central Vermont Railroad promotional pamphlet assured relaxation to tourists seeking to escape city life:

¹⁴⁶ Eaton, Allen H. *Handicrafts of New England*. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949.

¹⁴⁷ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont, February 6, 1901, p.3.

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Excellent fishing, quiet, peaceful repose, delightful scenery, healthful food, bracing, stimulating air - in fact, every desideratum for a summer's vacation can be found along the line of this [Central Vermont] Railroad.¹⁴⁸

The State of Vermont publicized abandoned farms, promoting rural living “as a source of mental and spiritual health.³⁹ Vermont focused on expanding recreational options such as bicycling, boating, golf, and fishing. In 1876, Maple Corner was “selected by people from the city this summer to spend the hot summer.”¹⁴⁹ Fishermen frequently visited Curtis Pond. Entries from Rome Van Ornam’s diary reflect the popularity of the pond: “the boys caught quite a bit of fish at Curtis Pond,” “the folks still a fishing over at the pond. They caught a pickerel that weighed three pounds,” and “went fishing in pm. Caught about 100 perch.”¹⁵⁰ In 1908, Herman Cross caught “the largest bass taken out of Curtis Pond for years and probably the largest taken out of any ponds in that neighborhood.”¹⁵¹ The Van Ornams then hung the prize fish on the wall in the cigar store at Camp Comfort, where they traced the size and recorded the weight and dimensions “to show any doubting Thomas, who might question the story.”¹⁵²

In 1889, a tourist came to Calais “to visit some of the picturesque lakes of that town in search of water lilies.”¹⁵³ The visitors arrived at the farmstead of Azro Nelson (**HD#1**), and “after confiding our team to his care and leaving directions to prepare us lunch, we proceeded to the pond, which lies about a stone’s throw from his house. This pond ...was ... quite a body of water.”¹⁵⁴

Expanding the state's rail networks following the American Civil War brought visitors to take advantage of Vermont's scenic and recreational opportunities. Early summer visitors stayed in boarding houses, tents, or crude fishing camps. During the middle part of the nineteenth century, campers and fishermen visited Curtis Pond. They were locals who tented periodically throughout the summer rather than settling in for the entire season.

In the 1890s, Vermont stimulated the rural economy and filled the growing number of abandoned farms through a campaign to "sell" Vermont. It advertised the Green Mountains as a place to visit and, more importantly, a place to buy or build a summer home. By the turn of the twentieth- century, old farmsteads had gained new life, and the shores of lakes and ponds began to thicken with summer cottages.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ Vermont Board of Agriculture, "The Resources and Attractions of Vermont." Montpelier, Vt: Watchman Publishing Co., 1891.

¹⁴⁹ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, August 2, 1876, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ Rome Van Ornam Diaries, Vermont Historical Society, Leahy Library, Barre, Vermont.

¹⁵¹ *Montpelier Evening Argus*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 27, 1908, p.2.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *Argus and Patriot*, Montpelier, Vermont, July 17, 1889, p.4.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ *Vermont Historic Preservation Plan Tourism Theme*. Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, Vermont, 1991.

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George Elgin Mann (**HD#1**), who owned the general store (**HD#12**), built a boathouse on Curtis Pond, where he rented out boats to visitors. He also sold camp lots along the pond. In 1926, Mann opened the Mann Wild Animal Farm, where he kept many animals, including deer, swans, goats, African and White China geese, Pekin ducks, raccoons, mink, and an alligator. In 1937, the *Barre Daily Times* reported:

George Elgin Mann of Maple Corner has been raising deer for 11 years, and that is why he would never kick out the closed season on deer was never opened – he has grown to love the animals. Mr. Mann, who has a dairy farm and has also raised swans, fox, raccoons, mink, goats, geese, and ducks, once tried his hand at alligators. There was quite a stir about Curtis Pond the time one of his alligators got loose. The critter never did show up again, and Mrs. Mann believes he just natural-perished during the first cold spell.¹⁵⁶

During the 1920s, when the automobile became widely available for the first time, the second home industry gained momentum. Vacationers could venture into the unspoiled land, no longer dependent upon the railway, searching for old farms and secluded campsites.¹⁵⁷ In Maple Corner, the Gallagher family used the George Tewksbury House (**HD#6**), and the Bliss family primarily used the William White House (**HD#9**) as summer homes.

The State of Vermont sponsored a campaign to sell Vermont, stimulate the rural economy, and fill the state's abandoned homes. The Maple Corner summer home industry began as people built permanent homes for their families or purchased farmhouses for summer use. When settlers first came to Curtis Pond, the land around the shore was entirely farmland. However, as farming declined and people arrived increasingly to build summer cottages, farmers gradually sold land around the lake to summer people. With the "advent of the summer home industry, the lakeshore gradually replaced the surrounding farmland as an economic commodity."¹⁵⁸ New owners converted former farmhouses into summer homes. These included the George Tewksbury House (**HD#5**), Robinson House (**HD#14**), and the William White House (**HD#10**). In addition to farmhouses, owners began building smaller lakeside cottages along Curtis Pond.

Maple Corner Community Center

¹⁵⁶ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, April 20, 1937, p.7.

¹⁵⁷ *Vermont Historic Preservation Plan Tourism Theme*. Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, Vermont, 1991.

¹⁵⁸ Clifford, Susannah. "Retreat to Vermont- An Architectural History of a Vermont Summer Community" Master's Thesis, Columbia University, 1987.

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Following the Second World War, the Grange (**HD#3**) lost its importance in the community. Led by Mattie and Clyde Fitch, Grange members banded together to find a new use for the hall. A small group purchased the building in 1949. This group consisted of former Grange members E. Clyde Fitch, Stanley Fitch, Marian Anderson Fitch, Floyd Fitch, Beatrice Fitch, and Mildred Bullock. In March 1950, Theresa Brungardt, the Vermont State Director of Recreation, spoke to a crowd at the hall about the “possibilities for organized community recreation and achievements of groups in other rural communities.”¹⁵⁹ The attendees appointed a committee to form a group following the presentation. Naming themselves the Maple Corner Community Center, the group took over the hall during its first year and updated the kitchen. The group reduced its debt through fundraisers such as baking beans, a community auction, and supper, chicken pie supper, and three one-act plays. The Maple Corner PTA donated a 16mm projector for movies, and the group installed a pool table. Additional events included baseball games, square dances, and comedy nights.

When the Maple Corner Community Center took over the Grange building, it put on a series of three plays in 1950 and

Soon, fellows who had wasted their theatrical talents on telling panther stories or auctioning at church auctions were startling their cows by rehearsing parts at chore time, and womenfolk who were ‘right out straight’ running households or working in the store or going to school had to take on the extra effort of learning comedy parts or leading lady roles. What with memorizing, rehearsing, gathering props, and doing publicity for the opening night, Maple Corners people had a busy spring.¹⁶⁰

The first Community Center performance was “Henry’s Mail Order Bride,” “The Outcome of Income,” and Sophie from Saundersville.” An evening of square dancing followed the performances.

In 2001, the Community Center put together “The Men of Maple Corner” calendar to raise money for the building. The calendar featured a collection of Calais’ barely clad men. The calendar was a regional and nationwide hit and raised \$500,000, of which \$150,000 went toward building repairs.

The spirit of the Maple Corner community that bound together to repair the community center in 2001 defines the Maple Corner community of the present day. The Maple Corner has transitioned from an agriculture-based economy to one primarily of a residential area. Despite a change in the community’s makeup, there is still a strong sense of community in the general store/cafe and community center.

¹⁵⁹ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, March 22, 1950, p.3.

¹⁶⁰ *Barre Daily Times*, Barre, Vermont, August 18, 1950, p.5.

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"Agriculture and Industry," *Central Vermont, A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary Website*. National Park Service, the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont Historical Society, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, N.D. Date Accessed April 13, 2017.

"Kents Corner," Agency of Commerce and Community Development State Historic Sites. <https://historicsites.vermont.gov/>. Date Accessed: November 27, 2021.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Maple Corner Historic District
Name of Property

Washington County, Vermont
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHP 1205-27

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 24.72 ac

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 44.37787 Longitude: -72.49444
2. Latitude: 44.37617 Longitude: -72.49263
3. Latitude: 44.37353 Longitude: -72.49257
4. Latitude: 44.37274 Longitude: -72.49347
5. Latitude: 44.37392 Longitude: -72.49738
6. Latitude: 44.37656 Longitude: -72.49647

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary follows the outer lines of all the parcels in the district and is shown as the red line on the attached map titled "Maple Corner Historic District". The district extends into the Upper Dam Parcel (Span #120-037-10404) as far as the west bank of the dam spillway and the west bank of the brook that runs out of Curtis Pond.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries follow the parcels of the contributing properties in Calais that are historically associated with the village of Maple Corner.

Maple Corner Historic District
Name of Property

Washington County, Vermont
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Brian Knight
organization: Brian Knight Research
street & number: PO Box 1096
city or town: Manchester state: VT zip code: 05254
e-mail brianknight@fastmail.fm
telephone: 201-919-3416
date: July 29, 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc., may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Maple Corner Historic District

City or Vicinity: Calais

County: Washington

State: Vermont

Maple Corner Historic District
Name of Property

Washington County, Vermont
County and State

Photographer: Brian Knight

Date Photographed: December 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 33: Looking at HD#1 from the south
- 2 of 33: Looking at HD#1a from the east
- 3 of 33: Looking at HD#1b from the southwest
- 4 of 33: Looking at HD#1c from the southwest
- 5 of 33: Looking at HD#1d from the east
- 6 of 33: Looking at HD#2 from the south
- 7 of 33: Looking at HD#2a from the southwest
- 8 of 33: Looking at HD#3 from the southwest
- 9 of 33: Looking at HD#4 from the west
- 10 of 33: Looking at HD#4a from northwest
- 11 of 33: Looking at HD#5 from the northwest
- 12 of 33: Looking at HD#6 from the west
- 13 of 33: Looking at HD#6a from the west
- 14 of 33: Looking at HD#7 from the west
- 15 of 33: Looking at HD#7a from the west
- 16 of 33: Looking at HD#8 from the west
- 17 of 33: Looking at HD#8a and #8 from the southeast
- 18 of 33: Looking at HD#9 from the northeast
- 19 of 33: Looking at HD#9a from the northwest
- 20 of 33: Looking at HD#9b from the northwest
- 21 of 33: Looking at HD#9c from the northeast
- 22 of 33: Looking at HD#10 from the southeast
- 23 of 33: Looking at HD#10 from the east
- 24 of 33: Looking at HD#11 from the east

Maple Corner Historic District
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- 25 of 33: Looking at HD#12 from the southeast
- 26 of 33: Looking at HD#15 from the southeast
- 27 of 33: Looking at HD#13 from the southeast
- 28 of 33: Looking at HD#13a from the north
- 29 of 33: Looking at HD#14 from the southeast
- 30 of 33: Looking at HD#14 from the east
- 31 of 33: Looking at HD#16 from the southeast
- 32 of 33: Looking north on County Road
- 33 of 33: Looking south on County Road

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels, with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Maple Corner Historic District
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List of Figures

Figure 12 View looking northwest towards the corner of County Road and Worcester Road. HD#1 is in the background. HD#14 is to the left, and HD#2 is to the right (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 13 HD#1, C.1920 (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 14 Community Hall (HD#3) before being moved to its present location (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 15 HD#6 C.1910 (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 16 Calais Creamery (HD#6) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 17 Original John Van Rensselaer Kent House (now destroyed) and barn. (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 18 William White House (HD#10) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 19 Lackey's Store (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 20 Dwight Marsh House (HD#14) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 21 Robinson House (HD#15) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 22 Camp Comfort (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 23 View looking northwest towards the corner of County Road and Worcester Road. Hd#1 is in the background. HD#14 is to the left, and HD#2 is to the right.

Figure 24 Dwight Marsh House (HD#14) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 25 Robinson House (HD#15) (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Figure 26 Camp Comfort (Image Courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

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