

KIN.63

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Plymouth

63

Town **Kingston**

District (neighborhood or village)
Triphammer

Address **21 Wapping Road**

Historic Name **Capt. Thomas Willett House**

Use: Present **residence**

Original **residence**

Date of Construction **? 17th c. ell; circa 1700 house**

Source **Abbott Lowell Cummings (via owner)**

Style/Form **Colonial / Saltbox**

Architect/Builder **Unknown**



Exterior Material:

Foundation **Fieldstone**

Wall/Trim **wood clapboard / wood**

Roof **wood shingle**

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures
garage (2); studio (3)

Major Alterations (with dates) **5' addition to east end shortly after built; restoration by Strickland & Strickland in 1946**

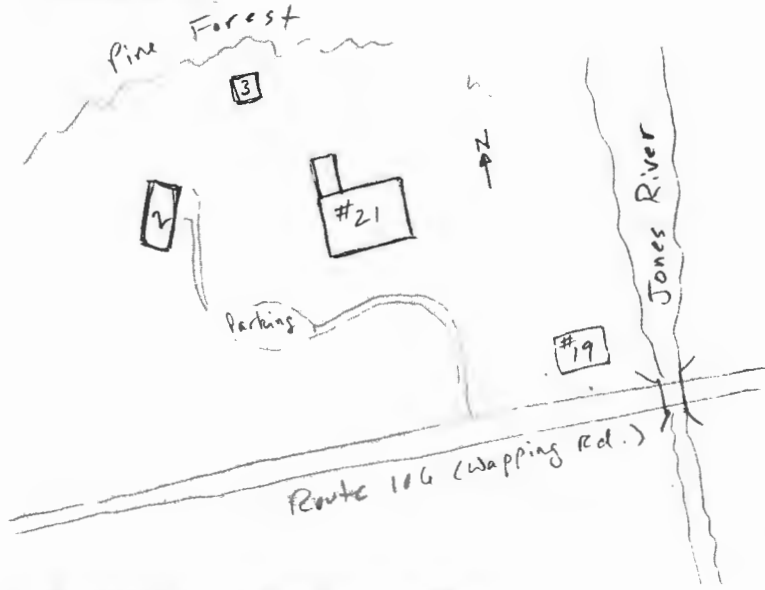
Condition **Good**

Moved no yes Date

Acreage **5.7**

Setting **rural - well set back from street with large lawn and rear meadow - pine forest surrounding rear of property**

Sketch Map



Recorded by **Chad Andrew Perry**

Organization **BU Preservation Studies Program**

Date (month/year) **4/98**

RECEIVED

NOV 1 1998

MASS. HIST. COMM.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [X] *see continuation sheet*

The Captain Thomas Willett House, part of which is said to be the oldest house in Kingston, is a restored, integral lean-to saltbox probably dating to the early 18th century, with a rear ell possibly dating to the mid to late 17th century. The main block has a rectangular footprint and center chimney plan. The two-story, five-bay house has a center entry and is two rooms deep while the rear ell. This one-story, two-bay structure is only one room deep with a chimney located near the north end. The most elaborate ornament is the main entry, a reproduction from the ca. 1717 Short House in Newbury, consisting of double, three-panel doors flanked by fluted pilasters and with dentiled entablature over a six light transom. Windows are mostly 12-over-12 with a 12-over-8 on the second floor of the northeast side, all with simple surrounds. Corner boards are limited to the rear ell only. A 20th century wood frame garage sits to the west of the house and a small, approximately ten foot square hipped roof shingled structure sits at the edge of the field to the north. The latter was formerly a fish market moved here by the owner from a site across the street from the Milepost restaurant in Duxbury. The Willett House site is well set back from the street and surrounded by fruit trees, shade trees, and pine forest.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [] *see continuation sheet*

The main block of the Willett House, in its current configuration, is a typical early 18th century saltbox. Town records indicating a land grant to Capt. Thomas Willett in 1639, including forty acres of "upland and meadow" and seven acres "on which to build his house," have served as the basis for dating the rear ell. In *The Story of the Thomas Willett House*, Gordon Massingham of the Kingston Historical Commission assumed that the ell was built around 1640 and it apparently served as a model for a precise, although somewhat larger replica built at Plymoth Plantation in 1994. HABS field notes suggested a slightly later 1653 date, apparently based on town histories published in 1884 and 1920. Abbott Lowell Cummings visited the house in 1996 and, according to the owner, stated that the rear ell did show evidence of 17th century construction (based in part on sheathing exposed at the time) and that the saltbox was probably built around 1700.

The ownership history has been thoroughly researched and indicates the (house and?) land was sold to Governor William Bradford in 1653. It remained in the Bradford family when it was willed to his son, Major William Bradford, who built the "Bradford House" on Landing Road, and then to Samuel and Gershom Bradford. In 1747, the land was sold to Reverend William Rand and later to John Faunce, in whose family it remained for quite some time. From December 1936 to July 1937, a Historic American Buildings Survey team recorded the site and listed the owner as George Higgins. Shortly thereafter, a Mrs. Peabody owned the property and it was under her ownership that the house underwent a restoration by Strickland & Strickland in 1946. The current owner has not significantly altered the appearance of the house since she bought it and it appears very much as it did following the 1946 restoration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [] *see continuation sheet*

Massingham, Gordon. The Story of the Thomas Willett House. t.s., 1996.
HABS Field Notebook 237. 1937.

[] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *See National Register Criteria Statement form attached.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Road

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (cont'd.)

The oldest part of the house is the approximately 14' x 20' ell extending north from the rear of the main house, aligned with the west side of the saltbox. It is unknown whether the ell was always in this location or moved here when the main house was built. The main house, actually built well after Capt. Willett died, is oriented south and was extended approximately five feet to the east, probably shortly after it was built. Strickland & Strickland's plan and elevation executed at the time of the 1946 restoration, suggest a different evolution. It shows a small, one story, L-shaped plan, the footprint of which includes only about one quarter of the hall (room 2 on plan) illustrated as a shed lean-to encompassing the hearth, and none of the parlor (room 1 on plan). Evidence for this configuration includes two beams, the east chimney girt in room 5 and the former end girt in room 5. The south end of both members are cut at an angle which may have accommodated rafters at one time. Further investigation is needed to support this theory.

The current plan of the interior consists of a parlor, hall, small northwest room, kitchen, small northeast room, and rear ell, designated rooms 1 through 6 on the plan attached. Room 1 contains plain, boxed corner and chimney posts, visible on the south side of the room only while a small portion of the boxed chimney girt is exposed along the west wall. The fireplace has a Federal mantle and moldings which are echoed in the chair rail surrounding the room. This room does not contain any paneling, instead being plastered throughout.

Room 2 has undergone restoration by Strickland and Strickland and currently has a paneled fireplace wall with two large horizontal panels above the fireplace measuring 18" x 53" (upper) and 13" x 53" (lower). There are two recessed closets with two-panel doors on either side of the fireplace which has much plainer moldings compared with room 1. The southwest corner post and northwest post are visible but boxed with a quirked bead decoration. The 10" summer beam is exposed and also has a quirked bead cut into the edges but no decorative "stop" where it meets the walls. As in room 1, chair rail is applied around the room.

Room 3 is a small, approximately 9' x 10' room, with a bathroom and laundry closet located at the north end. The bathroom was formerly the location of a rear stair to the second floor. Exposed beam locations include the north wall of the bathroom (simple taper), west wall of the bathroom (no decoration), west wall of the main room (boxed and beaded), and east wall of the main room (no decoration). A trap door leads down to the basement extending partially below room 2.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston**21 Wapping Road**

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (cont'd.)

Room 4, traditionally the kitchen, was the subject of most of the 1946 restoration. The chimney girts are both exposed, the west girt being boxed and beaded while the east girt is exposed with a simple chamfer and no stop. The hearth was completely reconfigured in 1946 and measures 52" high by 92" wide, containing a bake oven to the rear of the west side. The shadow molded sheathing of the east and west walls as well as the feather-edge paneling above the fireplace are also a product of the restoration. A trap door near the northwest corner of the room leads down to the "root cellar" which extends below room 5 to the east.

Room 5 is very roughly finished and now contains a small kitchen. The girt running north to west was originally the end of the house as evidenced by a chamfer on only the west side and plank sheathing visible above its east side near the north end of the room. This room is stud framed while the rest of the house is plank framed. The joists are currently exposed in this room but evidence suggests the ceiling was originally plastered.

Room 6 is the rear ell, purported to be the 17th century component of the house. There is currently no visible evidence supporting this contention but Abbott Lowell Cummings visited the house in 1996 and, according to the owner, was able to assign a 17th century date based on exterior sheathing exposed at that time. Inside this 14' by 19' ell, the light framing is exposed but is not decorated. Corner gunstock posts contain up-braces to the plates on the north side of the ell. The fireplace is sheathed in simple paneling with a two-panel door to the west leading to a corner closet. A framed, sliding "shutter" is located on the north wall where it meets the bathroom in room 3, probably some kind of pass through as opposed to an original exterior window.

The main (south) stair has fairly elaborate turned balusters and newel post and leads to a landing accessing the two chambers to the east and west. As in the room below, the west chamber has an exposed summer beam decorated with a quirked bead while the posts in both chambers are boxed and beaded. Other exposed framing is seen at the landing (southwest corner post and girts) and west of the attic stair (post, rear plate, chimney tie beam, and rafter assembly). Other notable features upstairs include the recessed chamber fireplaces with simple moldings and mantle pieces.

In general, the house exhibits construction features and details typical of early 18th century construction. The exposed, decorated framing elements are not the elaborate type that would be expected in a First Period house but do have some decoration in the form of small quirked beads, more typical of the early- to mid-1700s. Abbott Lowell Cummings has suggested a date of circa 1700 for the larger saltbox portion of the house.

KIN.03

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

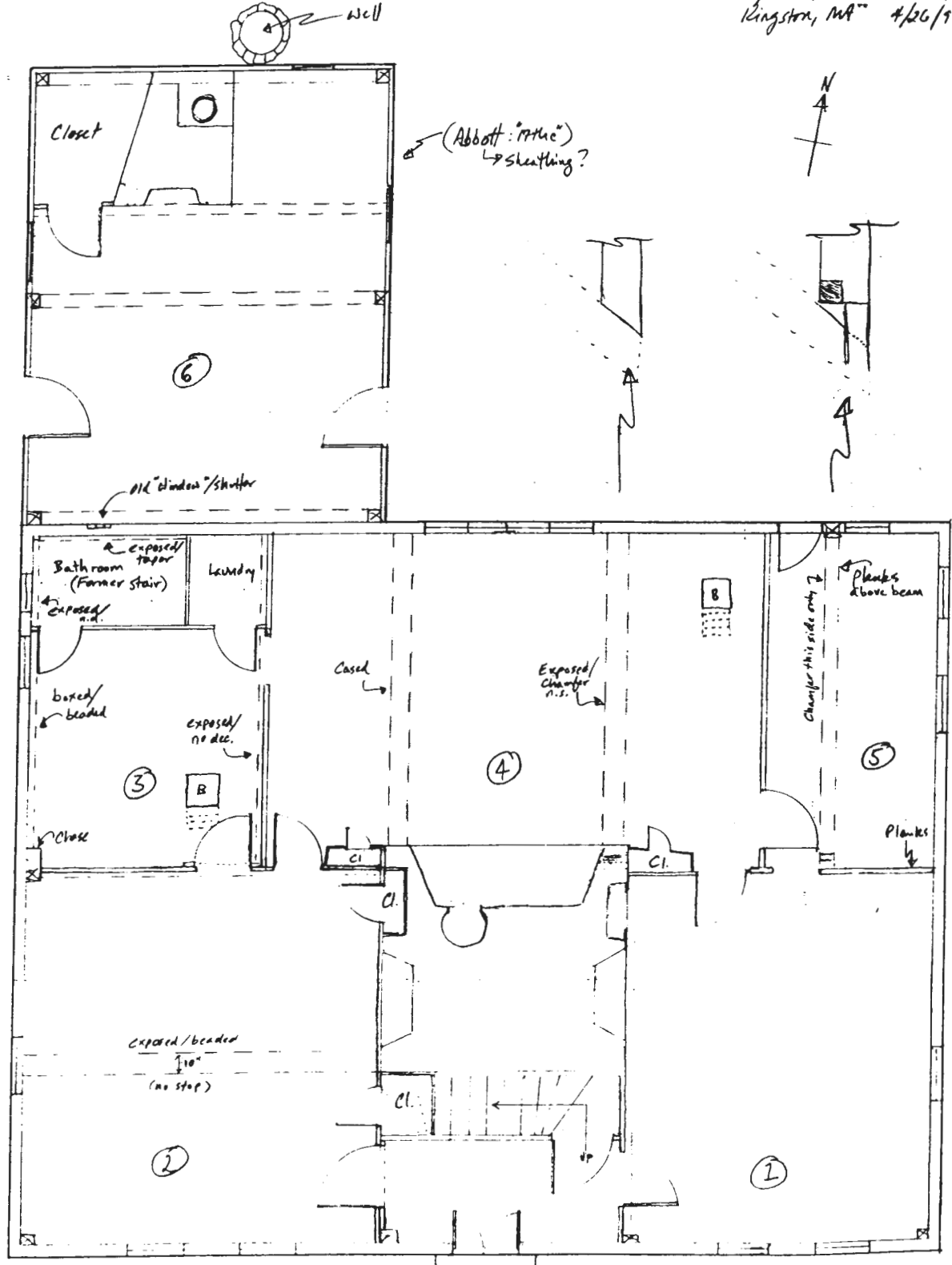
21 Wapping Road

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

Captain Thomas Willett House
Kingston, MA 4/26/98

PLAN



KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



MAIN (SOUTH) ENTRY



FROM SOUTHEAST

KN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



FROM NORTHWEST



REAR EL -
EAST ELEVATION

KIN.63

Community

Property Address

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



ENTRANCE HALL -
LOOKING WEST



ROOM 1
FIREPLACE
WALL

KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



SUMMER BEAM
ROOM 2 @
FIREPLACE WALL



HEARTH -
ROOM 4

KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



ROOM 5 - LOOKING NORTH
(ORIGINALLY END TIE BEAM/
CHAMFER ON WEST SIDE ONLY)



ORIGINAL END GIRT, CORNER
POST AT NORTHEAST ADDITION -
LOOKING NORTH

KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



SOUTH WALL -
REAR ELL



"OLD" WINDOWS/
SHUTTER AT
SOUTH END OF
ELL



KIN.63

LET

Community

Property Address

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

REAR ELL -
VIEW TO NORTHEAST
CORNER



FIREPLACE - REAR
ELL

KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



2nd FLOOR LANDING - VIEW EAST



2nd FLOOR LANDING - VIEW WEST



KIN.63

Community

Property Address

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--

CHAMBER ABOVE
ROOM 2 - FIREPLACE WALL



SW CORNER -
CHAMBER
OVER
ROOM 2

KIN.63

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Kingston

21 Wapping Rd.

Area(s) Form No.

--	--



CHAMBER ABOVE ROOM 1 -
FIREPLACE WALL



2ND FLOOR HALL - NORTH OF
ATTIC STAIR
VIEW CAST FROM BATHROOM
ABOVE ROOM 3

KIN.63

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community
Kingston
Area

Property Address
21 Wapping Rd.
Form #

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

Individually eligible.

Contributing to a potential district.

Eligible only in a historic district.

Potential historic district.

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by **Claire W. Dempsey**.

This property was surveyed by students in the Boston University Preservation Studies Program for its First Period Survey of the Old Plymouth Colony. Using MHC's MACRIS database, properties believed to have been constructed before 1720 were visited by students, to examine their interiors for physical evidence to support this claim. Although further research may reveal important contradictory evidence, no portions of an exposed and decorated frame were visible at this time. This building appears from this examination to date instead to the mid-to-late 18th century, an important discovery in its own right. In addition, the building is an important remnant of the town's early settlement period. This property retains integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association, and is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, at the local level of significance.

FORM B - BUILDING - UPDATE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

KIN.63

Assessor's Number <u>0044-0042</u>	USGS Quad <u>PLIMOUTH</u>	Area(s) <u>C</u>	Form Number <u>63 UPDATE</u>
---------------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------------------

Town KINGSTON

Place (neighborhood or village) TRIPHAMMER

Address 21 WAPPING RD

Historic Name CAPT. THOMAS WILLET HOUSE

Uses: Present RESIDENCE

Original RESIDENCE

Date of Construction c. 1640 - 1760

Source TOWN RECORDS, DEEDS, WILLS, TOWN HISTORY

Style/Form INTEGRAL SALT BOX

Architect/Builder THOMAS WILLET



Exterior Material: 6

Foundation FIELDSTONE

Wall/Trim CLAPBOARD

Roof CEDAR SHINGLE

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures ② GARAGE

③ STUDIO

Major Alterations (with dates) NONE

Condition VERY GOOD

Moved no yes Date _____

Acreage 6.5 ACRES

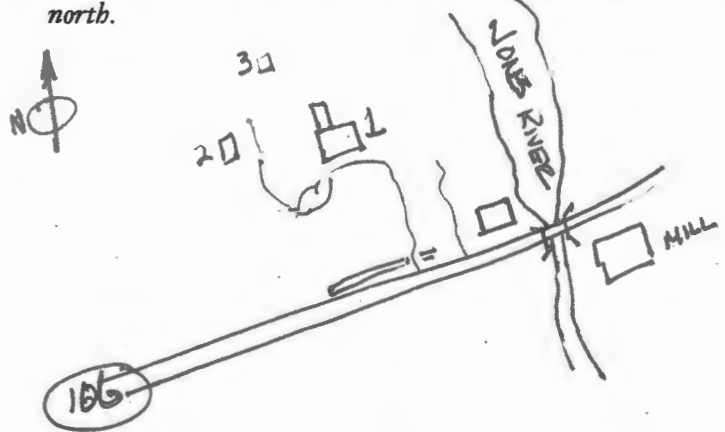
Setting LAWNS & GARDENS AROUND

HOUSE w/ MANY FRUIT TREES, TO

REAR MEADOW, ONE FOREST, + RIVER

Sketch Map

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by GORDON MASSINGHAM

Organization KINGSTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Date (month/year) 5 / 23 / 1996

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

THE ORIGINAL PART OF THE HOUSE IS THE REAR E.L. THIS IS A ONE STORY COTTAGE WITH GABLED CEILING AND LOFT. IT HAS A LOFT AND THE REMAINS OF ONE OF THE ORIGINAL WINDOWS. THE MAIN HOUSE WAS DESCRIBED BY ARDITH LOWELL CUMMINGS AS A INTERNAL SALT BOX. IT HAS A MAIN CHIMNEY WITH FIVE FIREPLACES, EACH FIREPLACE HAVING ITS OWN FLUE WHICH RISES TO THE TOP OF THE CHIMNEY. A FIVE FOOT ADDITION TO THE EAST OF THE BUILDING IS ALSO VERY OLD. THE HOUSE WAS VACANT AND IN DISREPAIR WHEN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY VISITED IN 1936. IN 1946 THE HOUSE WAS RESTORED. THE WORK WAS SUPERVISED BY THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM STRICKLAND'S STRICKLAND. IT IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A SALT BOX

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

SEE ATTACHED - STORY OF THOMAS WILLET HOUSE

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

SEE ATTACHED "STORY OF THOMAS WILLET HOUSE" -
BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Community

KINGSTON

KIN. 63

Property Address

21 WAPPING RD

Area(s)	FormNo.
	63

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible only in a historic district
 Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by GORDON MASSINGHAM
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Thomas Willett house is recognized as the oldest house in Kingston, and is one of the oldest surviving frame houses in the United States. The original structure, the present el, was built about 1640, with the most of the remainder of entire structure dating prior to 1700. A five foot addition to the entire house was added sometime later, probably in the 18th century. The main house is an integrated lean-to, post and beam salt box with a central chimney and vertical planking. The el is maintained very much in its original form with visible purlins, and one remaining old wooden window, now in the wall between the el and the main house. Both the saltbox and the el are specimens of early construction. The house is situated on 6 1/2 acres of upland near the river- most of the original 7 acres granted by the colony selectmen to Thomas Willett, "on which to build his house." The house was restored in 1946 by the architectural firm of Strickland and Strickland who did numerous other restorations including Old North Church and the Paul Revere House. Many of the historic features and significant details of the house have been preserved.

Captain Thomas Willett was an important Plymouth Colony figure. He succeeded Miles Standish as Captain of the Train Band, served as selectman and magistrate. He was also successful in business and later became the first English mayor of New York. He sold the property to Governor William Bradford in 1653. It is perhaps the only property associated with William Bradford that survives. It remained in the Bradford family for nearly a century. Bradford willed it to this oldest son, Major William Bradford an important figure in King Phillips War. It passed through his son Samuel to Samuel's son, Gershom, who became Kingston's first representative to the General Court when the town was set off from Plymouth in 1726.

The property represents the expansion of Plymouth Colony from its original settlement on Town Brook to adjacent area, in this case the rich farmlands and opportunities for mill sites along the Jones River. The house is strongly representative of first period construction, particularly as the home of Plymouth Colony men of distinction. Were Thomas Willett or William Bradford to venture to the site today, they would definitely recognize the house.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Kingston

Property Address

21 Wapping Rd

KIN.63

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)	Form No.





THE STORY OF THE THOMAS WILLETT HOUSE

By Gordon Massingham

Early Years

Thomas Willett was born about 1610, the son of Thomas and Alice Willett. The elder Willett was either a weaver from Norwich or a clergyman of Yarmouth. Possibly, the Willetts knew the Pilgrim spiritual leader John Robinson, who had served in Norwich prior to going to Scrooby. The Willett family settled in Leyden, Holland about 1615.

Mayflower

At age 19, Thomas Willett came to the new world in 1629 aboard a ship called the Mayflower, although apparently not the same ship that brought the original settlers to Cape Cod and finally Plymouth. The ship embarked from the Isle of Wight and first arrived in the new world at Naumkeag. The majority of the passengers were Puritans recruited by the Massachusetts Bay Company. Other "saints" who accompanied Willett were Thomas Blossom, his wife and two children, and Richard Masterson. Plymouth sent a boat to Naumkeag to fetch the new arrivals, who landed in Plymouth on May 15. They were part of the Leyden congregation who now had been brought to the new world at the "purchasers'" expense.

Willett sent to Maine

In 1628 the Council for New England granted Plymouth Colony a patent for a sizable portion of the coast around the Kennebec River in what is now Maine. Two trading houses were built, one on the Kennebec and one on the Penobscot River. In 1630 Isaac Allerton, a kind of business agent to the Colony though not a particularly good or faithful one, had obtained a patent in London for another tract along the Penobscot, which would take business away from the Plymouth Colony trading post. Edward Ashley had been hired by London to run things.

Furs, particularly beaver, acquired from the Indians were an important part of the colony's release from its indebtedness to the London adventurers. Between 1631 and 1636, 10,000 pounds worth of beaver and otter were shipped to England.

Young Willett was immediately seen as a newcomer of ability and enterprise, and was sent to the Kennebec trading post to serve as agent, a position he was to hold until 1634. According to William Bradford, it was decided, "to prevent worst mischief...by joining an honest young man that came from Leyden with him as a fellow and not merely as a servant, which young man being discreet, and one they could trust."

Ashley, Bradford reported, was a very "profane young man who lived among the Indians as a savage and went naked among them." Ashley did obtain a lot of beaver, but when he traded powder and shot with the Indians, which he was under bond by the King's law not to do, he was arrested and shipped back to England. In 1631? Willett appeared in England at Ashley's trial. The following year Allerton was discharged as manager for Plymouth Plantation.

Wrecked at Piscataquis

In June 1632 Willett was aboard the shallop of Captain John Wright, loaded with goods, headed from Maine to Plymouth. A seaman aboard the shallop lit a pipe and accidentally set fire to a barrel of powder which "tore the boat to pieces." The sailor was killed but Willett and others were rescued.

Trouble with the French

Later in 1632, while Willett was in Plymouth getting supplies French buccaneers robbed the trading post at Castine, also capturing Dixie Bull, his ship, and trading goods.

In 1634, Willett's time as agent at Kennebec came to an end. In 1635, he became agent at Penobscot. That year, he and his men were dispossessed of the Penobscot trading post by the Frenchman De Aulney who took the trading post in the name of France. He gave Willett and his men a shallop to let them sail home. They encountered a ship which took them under tow, but the shallop and its cargo were lost in a storm.

Willett returned to the Penobscot with Myles Standish and Master Girling's ship The Great Hope. But Girling would not sail his ship close enough to be effective, instead, firing his guns from too great a distance. So, the French remained in control of the fort.

Kennebec

Willetts success in this and perhaps his subsequent undertakings seemed to rest on his ability to deal with the Indians. An entry in Governor Winthrop's journal describes Willett studying his bible one night when Indians crept into his abode. "Accustomed to Willett's cheery countenance, they were astonished at his somber expression and fled."

Later, in 1648, Willett acquired a partnership in the Kennebec undertaking. He acquired land from the Indians on the river in exchange for some bread, peas, cloth coats, wine, and a bottle of strong waters. The following year, the Plymouth General Court leased the Kennebec trade to Willett. This continued until 1660, when Indian uprisings shut off the supply of pelts.

Willetts Family

Returning from Ashley's trial in England, Willett met John Browne and his family on the ship Lyon. Browne arrived in New England in 1636. On July 6, 1636, Willett married Mary Browne, the daughter of John Browne then of Duxbury, and the niece of Peter Browne, one of the Strangers who had arrived on the Mayflower. Browne later served as a commissioner of the United Colonies, a position he held for twelve years. Among his undertakings was the purchase of the tract that was to become Taunton, where he later settled.

Mary and Thomas Willett had thirteen children, five of whom were daughters. Four daughters survived to marry prominent colonists. One daughter, Martha, married on December 3, 1658, one John Saffin, lawyer, public official, land speculator, slave trader, and poet. He had crossed the Atlantic at a young age and was a ward of Governor Winslow. Some of Saffin's lines of elegy to Willett have been unearthed:

"Here lyes grand Willett whose good name
Did mount upon the wings of Fame"

Saffin worked for Willett as his agent in Virginia, probably for the tobacco trade. Saffin became Willett's lawyer and agent in Boston. After Willett's death, Saffin became the dominant force in the Willett family. He succeeded Willett as proprietor of Swansea. He rose to become speaker of the Massachusetts Bay General Court and later a judge in the Superior Court of Massachusetts. Saffin was later an owner of the Atherton company and was arrested, jailed, tried, convicted and had to forfeit his Rhode Island lands as a result of a dispute between Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 1688, Saffin moved to Bristol.

Another Willett daughter married the Rev. Samuel Hooker of Farmington, CT. Willett sons were named John, Thomas, and James. Willett's fourth son, Hezekiah, was born November 1651. John, Thomas, and Hezekiah went to Harvard. Hezekiah was killed by the Wampanoags on July 1, 1676, during King Philip's War. When Captain William Bradford re-captured Hezekiah's slave he told how the Indians, "were sorry for his death, mourned, kumbed his head, and hung wampum in his hair."

Relations with the Dutch

Interests in trading moved toward the west after the French became more of a presence in the north. Disputes began to arise over boundaries and trading rights. Willett, who spoke Dutch, was an effective spokesman in New Amsterdam. Bradford himself wrote to New Amsterdam's Governor, Peter Stuyvesant, to recommend Willett to him. By the 1640s, Isaac Allerton, who had left his association with Plymouth Colony in disgrace, was now in New Amsterdam. In 1646 Willett witnessed an Allerton deposition, and the following year was accused of using an Allerton clerk to bribe a Dutch customs official.

The Dutch declared war on the English in 1652. Plans were made to send an English force against New Netherlands from New England. Willett was ordered to provide logistical support for the force. Munitions shipped into Boston were stored in Willett's warehouse, which he owned with a partner William Paddy. Peace was reached in Europe in June 1654, before the expedition was mounted. In Plymouth, it was noted that Willett and Paddy overcharged for the storage of the munitions.

By the July of 1654, Willett was back doing business in New Amsterdam. However, war had hurt his business. His bark Desire was captured by a privateer who was authorized to take any ships trading with the Dutch. Willett was able to reclaim the bark in the courts, but only after extensive wrangling.

In 1657, Governor Prentice, who succeeded Governor William Bradford, appointed to the General Court, "Captain Thomas Willett, now returned from New Amsterdam." Willett had spent some time there, and "had ben hospitably entertained and honored as one of Governor Peter Stuyvesant's trusted agents."

In 1660 Willett served as representative of the Dutch in a conference at Hartford between the agents of New England and New Netherlands. Stuyvesant was seeking a peace agreement with the New England colonies. Willett probably had an interest in protecting his trading operations there. However, he was sitting across the negotiating table from his Kennebec partner Thomas Prentice and Simon

Bradstreet, his partner in the Atherton Company. Much of the disputed territory of the Dutch was given away to the United Colonies.

Yet, Willett remained a friend of Stuyvesant and helped him negotiate a treaty with the Mohawks, who became a valuable source of furs.

Just prior to Willett's death, the Dutch recaptured their former colony and proceeded to menace the New England coast. This also menaced Willett's trading empire. However, the Dutch returned New York to the English and the Dutch navy retired from Narragansett Bay.

Civic Responsibilities

Jan. 1, 1633, Willett was approved as a freeman by the Colony's General Court, making him eligible to vote and to hold office. He succeeded Myles Standish as captain of the train band, appointed to that position in March, 1648 by the Plymouth General Court. His duties were primarily logistical and not operational despite the problems with Uncas and the Mohegans.

In 1649 he was elected as one of the "seven men," a kind of Board of Selectmen responsible for disposing of lands and taking care of the poor. From 1651 to 1665 Willett was assistant governor of Plymouth Colony. In 1657, Governor Prence, appointed Willett to the General Court. He was also elected magistrate, responsible for holding court. Among the cases he tried were that of an indentured servant for raping an Indian girl and of a master for cruelty to a servant.

Land Holdings in Plymouth

Willett was granted land in 1639 by the Court of Assistants, which, headed by Bradford, held power over all the land in the colony. The next year, they Court of Assistants was forced to turn the land over to the "Freemen." In return, they were granted certain pieces of land. Willett was given two pieces of land, approximately forty acres of "upland and meadow" for farming, and another seven acres "on which to build his house." More than six of that original seven acres still remains with the house.

It can be assumed that about the year 1640, Willett built the original structure which still stands on the property at 21 Wapping Road in Kingston, now the "el" to the saltbox.. The house built in the summer of 1994 at Plimoth Plantation is a precise, although somewhat larger replica. The saltbox was built some time later.

With William Bradford and William Paddy, Willett owned the right to Clark's Island in Duxbury Bay. In February 1649, they returned their rights to the island to the town. Land at Punckateesett on Seconnett River in Rhode Island was owned by a number of Plymouth persons with Willett's name appearing at the top of the list in 1651.

Businessman

Willett was one of a number of prominent individuals who played a crucial role in the town-founding system. They would obtain a grant, negotiate with the Indians, create the land-holding corporation in the town, admit shareholders, apportion rights, finance costs, and lure settlers. Often they had multiple land holdings and were absentee landlords. It was a profitable undertaking.

Also, by 1650 Willett was actively involved in shipping and trading between American, West Indies, and European ports. These operations were so successful that he was able to act as banker to the Colony when it was seeking to buy Indian rights to major tracts of land.

Sowams

In September 1652, Sowams was granted to Plymouth Colony's leaders who had assumed the colony's original debt to the London financial backers. In addition to Willett, these leaders included Bradford, Winslow, Standish, White, Prentice, Thomas Cushman, Thomas Clarke and others. They paid Massasoit 35 pounds for the land, which they called the "garden of the patent."

A dispute ensued over the ownership of Sowams between Plymouth Colony and the Bay Colony. The United Colony Commissioners decided the dispute in favor of Plymouth. The first settler there was Willett's father-in-law, Browne, who set up on the Providence River. Willett led the effort to develop the tract, and moved there himself about 1660, building his home on Bullock Cove, where at his death he owned more than 1200 acres. He had sold the house, which now stands in Kingston to Governor William Bradford.

By 1667 there were some 200 settlers at Sowams. Eventually the Sowams tract would include the towns of Swansea, Barrington, East Providence, Warren, and Bristol. This area gave Willett good port access for trading operations to the south with the Dutch colonies.

Atherton Company

Major General Humphrey Atherton of Dorchester served in the General Court and was chosen speaker in 1653. He was also a military leader who in the 1640s was sent on several missions by the United Colonies to subdue the Indians of Rhode Island, and rose to the rank of major general in 1661. He served as superintendent of the Praying Indians from 1658 to 1661, when Daniel Gookin was out of the country.

A notorious Atherton company venture involved lands belonging to the Narragansett Indians, including all the land south of what is now Providence in Rhode Island. When the United Colonies fined the Indians for depredations against the colonists, the Atherton Company in 1660, paid the fine, taking as collateral a mortgage on the land. When the Indians defaulted on the mortgage, the Atherton Company took possession of the land. In this venture, Atherton was joined by several prominent men including Governor John Winthrop, Governor Bradstreet, Governor Josias Winslow of Plymouth Colony, Richard Smith, Jr., Captain Edward Hutchinson, Thomas Willett, John Browne, and Willett's son-in-law John Saffin.

Willett and Browne were among those who served on a kind of executive committee for the Atherton Company. They met frequently in Boston. Joseph Dudley helped the company on three different occasions, during the last of which he was Governor of the Bay Colony. In this instance he recommended to the Board of Trade that the Atherton Company's claims to the Narragansett land be honored against the wishes of New England. He may have accepted a bribe to take this stand.

During the administration of Sir Edmund Andros as Governor General of the Dominion of New England a number of land companies were called out. Andros reviewed land claims according to English legal standards, and rejected most of them, including the Atherton Company's claims saying, "the grant was extorted by a troop of horse...and that the debt was fictitious." Andros found the New England land system beyond the pale of common law, although his findings were largely based on the premise that the land was the King's to convey and not the Indians.

The land owners became the leaders of a rebellion that overthrew Andros in 1689. One of the reasons they gave for the revolt was Andros' rejection of Indian deeds. Once Andros was gone, the Atherton Company promptly resumed operations.

Rehoboth

Dedham people had an interest in land, now in Wrentham. They were upset when they heard the Indians were planting and demanded that they remove. When the Indians were defiant, the Dedham people appealed to King Philip through Willett, but the issue continued to be a problem. As of 1655 Willett was a proprietor of Rehoboth, if not sooner.

North Rehoboth and Taunton Purchases

In 1661, on behalf of the United Colonies, Willett purchased a great tract north of Rehoboth and Taunton and subsequently became a shareholder in both of these purchases. Out of these purchases were formed the towns of Attleborough, Norton, Easton, and Mansfield. Willett owned property in seven towns and was responsible for founding three towns.

New Amsterdam

In 1664 four British ships put into Boston with 400 troops and four royal commissioners sent to dispossess the Dutch along the Hudson. King Charles II had given the Dutch colonies in America to his brother, the Duke of York and provided him with a force to take the colony. Willett was put on board for "counsel and advice."

The commander, Colonel Richard Nichols, offered generous terms and the Dutch capitulated. In 1665, Willett was appointed the first English Mayor of New York by Governor Nichols- and served three years. Among his accomplishments was negotiating the fur trade for the Duke.

Relationship with Indians

Willett was the Plymouth Colony official who was often at Mount Hope to negotiate with the Indians. There was a continuing problem in the Sowams Area between the settlers and Indians. Apparently, as long as Willett was around the Indians could be placated and he could also keep the settlers under control. However, once he was absented in New York, the situation worsened, completely breaking down after Willett's death.

When Wamsutta, King Philip's brother was captured at Monponsett Pond, about five miles west of the house, he said he was waiting for his friend Thomas Willett. Willett was dead. And, although Wamsutta was released in a few days, soon after he died. The Indians believed he had been poisoned by the colonists- one of

the causes of King Philip's War.

Friendship with Bradford

In 1653 Willett sold the house to William Bradford. In 1657 Bradford appointed Willett, along with Thomas Prence and Thomas Southworth "supervisors" for disposing of his estate.

Death

Willett died in Plymouth in 1674. He was buried near his home on a small rise overlooking Bullock's Cove in Swansea. His grave is marked by a substantial monument that was placed by the Historical Society of the City of New York. He left a will dated April 26, 1671 (age 64) (Will is in the records of the Commissioner of Plymouth County.) His inventory included ten flintlocks, five matchlocks, eleven fowling and birding pieces, six cases of pistols, one blunderbuss, and five swords. His library contained current books on military history and tactics. He owned eight black slaves.

William Bradford

William Bradford was born March 15, 1589, in Austerfield, Yorkshire, England. He crossed on the Mayflower in 1620, was a signer of the Mayflower Compact, and explored Cape Cod Bay aboard the shallop. When Governor Carver died, Bradford became governor. During the first 37 years of Plimoth Colony he was governor all but five years- 1633, 1634, 1636, 1638, and 1644. He became one of the "purchasers" of the colony when he and others bought out the original adventurers. His wife, Dorothy May jumped or fell overboard on the Mayflower while it lay at anchor off Provincetown. They had one son, John, who later came to Plymouth and died without issue. Later he married Alice, widow of Edward Southworth, by whom he had a daughter and two sons- William in 1624 and Joseph in 1630.

William Bradford's Of Plimoth Plantation is famous for its narrative history of Plimoth Colony, but it is also recognized as a classic of American literature. By common consent it is the greatest history written of colonial America. It tells of the pilgrim's time in England and Holland, of the journey of the Mayflower, the exploration and settlement of the new world, the First Thanksgiving, and, in fact, almost all we know of those early years.

While still Governor, Bradford purchased the house from Thomas Willett in 1653. Bradford died at age 68, on May 9, 1657. He left

a home valued at 45 pounds, an orchard, several parcels of land, ten chairs, and 400 books.

Major William Bradford

Born June 17, 1624, William was the eldest son of Governor Bradford. He fathered 15 children (birth dates 1652, 54, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 67, 68, 71, 75, 77). He inherited the house from his father in 1657.

Major John Bradford, who was to play an important role in the founding of Kingston as a separate town from Plymouth, was Major William's oldest son. Major William died in 1703 (4) at age 71. His will dated June 29, 1703 says my son John is to have "my father's manuscript- a narrative of the beginning of New Plymouth."

Town Duties

Initially, William the younger held title of Captain, presumably of the trained band. He also served on various committees, and as Plymouth Colony Selectman in 1701.

King Philips War

Major William played an important role in King Philips War, which lasted from June 1675 until August 1676. He commanded two companies of infantry (about 150 men) from Plymouth Colony. He was criticized for not being as aggressive as Benjamin Church. Major Bradford preferred to take a defensive posture, protecting the settlements, while Church often pursued the Indians into the swamps. Bradford admitted his shortcomings as a military officer. When the bloodshed started, his force relieved Taunton and Swansea. Ashawonks and 80 or 90 of her people surrendered to him and they were taken to Sandwich thereby taking a potentially powerful ally of Philip out of the war. Major William's force did pursue the fleeing Indians into the swamp and killed many stragglers.

In an interesting side note to the war, Indians captured and killed Hezekiah Willett and made off with his black servant, Jethro. In action around Swansea, Major William's force rescued Jethro.

Samuel Bradford

Born in 1667 to Major William and his wife, Samuel married a descendent of John Alden in 1689. He inherited the house from his father. Major William's will gives the house to Samuel, "who lives there now." Samuel was appointed highway surveyor in 1692, 1696. Died in Duxbury in April 1714. His will of 1713 names his oldest son Gershom as executor with his wife.

Gershom Bradford

Born December 21, 1691. In 1714 he inherited the house from his father Samuel. In 1721, along with Jacob Cooke, he owned a sawmill on Trout Brook. He married Patricia Wiswell of Duxbury, a descendent of John Alden, in 1716. They had eight children. Birth dates were recorded in 1713(?), 1717, 1720, 1726. Other dates were unrecorded. Appointed highway surveyor in 1714, fence viewer in 1720. In 1740, Gershom was elected Kingston's first representative to the General Court. In 1741 referred to as Captain Gershom Bradford. Died April 1757 at age 66.

Reverend William Rand

A minister of the First Church (perhaps the third to hold that position). He was a scholar, highly esteemed and respected by the informed and learned with whom he had an extensive acquaintance." He bought the house from Gershom Bradford in 1747.

Walter Faunce

Was the youngest person ever elected to the state legislature and then was the oldest person to serve in the state legislature. Bought the property in 1779. It remained in the Faunce family until 1946.

Bibliography

- Bailey, Sarah Y. The Civic Progress of Kingston. Kingston: 200th Anniversary of the town of Kingston Committee, 1926.
- Candee, Richard. "A Documentary History of Plymouth Colony Architecture, 1620-1700," Old Time New England. vols. 59, p. 105- 11, Vol 60, p. 37-53.
- Drew, Emily F. A History of Her Industries. Kingston: 200th Anniversary of the town of Kingston Committee, 1926.
- Hall, John R. In a Place Called Swansea. Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987.
- Leach, Douglas. Flintlock and Tomahawk. NY: Norton, 1966.
- Martin, John F. Profits in the Wilderness. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1991.
- Records of the Town of Plymouth. 3 vols. Boston: Clarke, 1889.
- Spencer, Wilbur. Pioneers of Maine Rivers. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1973.
- Vaughn, Alden. New England Frontier. Boston: Little Brown, 1965.
- Wakefield, Robert. William Bradford of the Mayflower. 3rd ed. Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants: 1991.
- Westbrook, Percy. William Bradford. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978.
- Willison, George. Saints and Strangers. Scranton: Haddon, 1945.

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

PL 1016
J. G. P. 1-10-84
SPTM

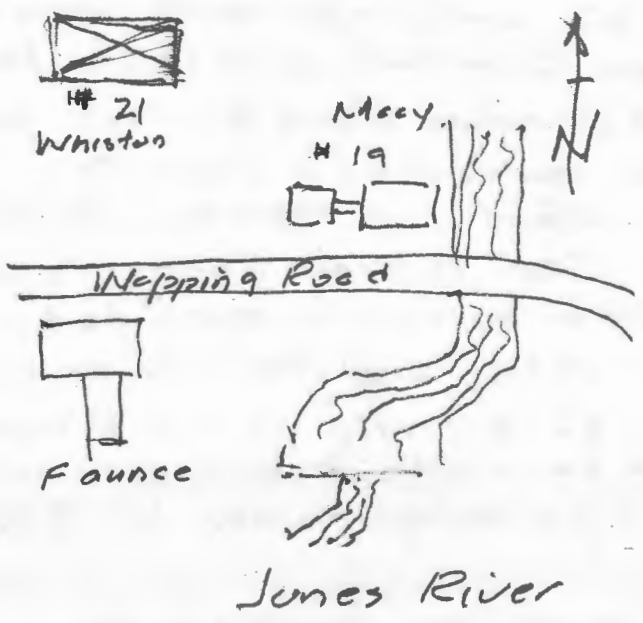
KIN.63

In Area no. <u>K</u>	Form no. <u>63</u>
-------------------------	-----------------------



1. Town Kingston
 Address 21 Wapping Road
 Name Upland Meadows
 Present use Residence
 Present owner Donald Whiston
 Description:
 Date 1631(?)
 Source Owner
 Style Salt Box

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Architect Kinkland-Kinbland
 (for present house)
 Exterior wall fabric clapboard
 Outbuildings (describe) -
 Other features _____
 Altered several Date _____
 Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:
 One acre or less _____ Over one acre
 Approximate frontage 85'
 Approximate distance of building from street 150'

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
 USGS Quadrant _____
 MHC Photo no. _____

6. Recorded by E H Holmes
 Organization Historical Comm
 Date 1/10/84

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Capt Thomas Willett

Original use Residence

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Aboriginal | _____ | Conservation | _____ | Recreation | _____ |
| Agricultural | _____ | Education | _____ | Religion | _____ |
| Architectural | _____ | Exploration/
settlement | _____ | Science/
invention | _____ |
| The Arts | _____ | Industry | _____ | Social/
humanitarian | _____ |
| Commerce | _____ | Military | _____ | Transportation | _____ |
| Communication | _____ | Political | _____ | | |
| Community development | _____ | | | | |

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This probably is oldest house in town. Built by captain Willett of land granted to Gov. William Bradford in 1629. Rudimentary house believed to have been soon after occupied by Capt Willett until he left to become the first Mayor of New York. House sold to Gov. Bradford in 1653 and occupied by him until his death, when willed to his son Maj William Bradford, who build the present "Bradford House" on Landing Road, for his son Maj John Bradford. House owned and occupied successively by Samuel Bradford and Ger sham Bradford until 1747 when sold to Rev. William Bond, Next sold to John Founce, after which it remained in the Founce Family until 1935, last Founce being Walter Founce who then lived directly across Klappping Road. Subsequently owned by a Mrs Reodudy and a Rev. Schafer prior to purchase by present owner in 1955

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)