

#35-77
35-78

ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

011792

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

2B2

PART I

CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN

CAPE COD NS

November 1963 and
February 1964

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN

EASTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Feb, 1964

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

EASTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

APPROVAL SHEET

Recommended Robert F. Gibbs Date 11-1-63
Superintendent

Recommended Robert E. Smith Date 5/1/64
Chief, EODC
architect for Chief Hall

Recommended Arnold Hue Date 5/26/64
Regional Director

App'd by Regional Director

Approved _____ Date _____
Director

THE CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE
AND BARN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
~~1.~~ ¹ Historical Data Section by Edison P. Lohr, Park Historian	1 - 5
~~2.~~ ¹ Administrative Data Section by George Von der Lippe, Acting Superintendent	6
~~3.~~ ⁴ Landscape Data Section by Arnold H. Gustavson, Landscape Architect	7
~~4.~~ ³ Architectural Data Section by F. Cliff Pearce, Resident Architect	

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Cape Cod National Seashore

Eastham, Massachusetts

The Captain Edward Penniman House and Barn

A. Local tradition and hearsay regarding structures

Captain Edward Penniman, born in Eastham, Massachusetts and operating out of New Bedford as a whaling captain, began his sea career at age eleven, shipping out as a cook. Rising successfully in his trade, he became Captain of the Whaler bark Minerva in 1860. He had married Betsey Augusta Knowles in 1859, and according to a grand-daughter, customarily took his wife and at least one child with him making in all some seven whaling voyages around the world. Penniman's last (seventh) voyage was in the Jacob A. Howland. Returning in 1884, he left the vessel at San Francisco and journeyed across the continent to Massachusetts with Mrs. Penniman. It is reported that on one of his voyages, he returned to port with one of the greatest loads of whale oil in the history of that now departed industry.

In 1868, Captain Penniman was engaged in business in Chicago, spending winters of four years there. He had begun the construction of his new home in Eastham in 1867, and returned summers to see how the work was getting on. A typical Cape Cod double house served as residence during this period. This structure stood just east of the present building. No trace of it remains, although a photograph, seen by Professor Connally in the Penniman house in 1962, shows this older house in the background.

In March, 1868, Penniman, his wife and two children (Bessie and Eugene) moved into their new home. A third son, Edward, was born there in 1870.

The Captain Edward Penniman house in Eastham, Massachusetts, located at the intersection of Fort Hill and Governor Prence Roads, is important historically because of its highly unusual style and its representation as the only whaling captain's home in the National Seashore area.

It is necessary, perhaps, to clarify a common saying to the effect that "such and such a house is a Captain's House" -- there is no such thing as a "Captain's House". Captains built houses, the style and appointments according to their individual bent and wealth. The great Cape Cod sea captains of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often built magnificent homes which are largely located in the Upper Cape areas, such as Yarmouth and Brewster. To attempt a comparison of the Captain Penniman house with the Colonial, Cape Cod or Greek Revival homes of most sea captains would be a foolish exercise because there is no comparison, save that of taste.

B. Architect, Designer and Builder

The style of the Penniman house, Second Empire French with Mansard roof, is unusual. Edward Penniman, for reasons apparently known only to himself, brought plans for his Mansard-roofed house and some of the materials from France, either directly or by order.

While a set of original construction specification is on hand, with carefully hand-written instructions in English, it is not known to this day who drew up these specifications nor who the architect and/or builder of the Captain Penniman house actually was. Professor E. A. Connally, supervising architect of the HABS team, and his secretary, Mrs. Marjorie S. Burling, interviewed some of the Penniman descendants as well as local historians who could know, and drew pretty much a blank. Historian Lohr talked to another Penniman grand-daughter, and others, with precisely the same result.

The only notation on the actual building of the house is to be found in notes taken by Professor Connally, who was told by Mrs. Maurice Broun of Kempton, Pa., grand-daughter of Edward Penniman, that shipwrights from Wellfleet built the house by day labor, coming down each day from Wellfleet to do the work. This statement is confirmed by a note on the old specifications themselves.

Time has prevented interviewing everyone who might supply us with the builder's name, nor have old newspapers of the day been studied in a rather dim prospect of discovery. This time-using research will necessarily be delayed; yet it is probable that the answer, if there is one, will be found while searching for something else. In spite of the fact that some constructional details suggest indifferent planning, it is certain that the Captain did not build the house himself.

Curious it is that no one seems to know who built this home, a structure resembling nothing else in the area or possibly in all of New England. Even the consistent local saying that the "Penniman's remained pretty much to themselves" would hardly preclude the natives knowing that _____ built the Penniman house. We are certain that someone does know. Mr. Albert Snow, for example, local historian of great ability, believes the builder to have been a Mr. Edmund Crosby of Brewster, said Crosby being a builder of great houses of the period. But we have no proof.

The Captain collaborated closely with his builder. On page 13 of the specifications we read "the glass in the front door to be furnished by the proprietor" and on page 14, "all others (mantle pieces) to be of marble on brackets and furnished by the Proprietor."

The house, built of lumber said to have been brought from Maine, was finally completed and promptly assessed at \$2750, more than any other building in Eastham. Apparently, even into the 1870's, depreciation had not set in, so far as the tax assessor was concerned, for a Schedule of Polls and Taxable Property of those years has a statement written on it by Penniman to the effect that "you value my House to (sic) High, Twenty five Hundred Dollars is enough (sic) and more than double the value of any other House in town."

Captain Penniman probably didn't mind being considered well off, but didn't want to pay the price of a good appearance. The notation on this same tax notice, "The Buggy you value One Hundred Dollars you may have by paying me Fourty five dollars," approaches the classic stand of all tax-payers.

C. The Barn

The barn, a two-storey carriage house which contained tools and a workshop, a hayloft, and stalls for a horse and cow, appears to have been built in 1880. Its builder is also unknown. It was assessed at \$350 in that year. Similar in its Mansard-roof appearance to the house, this barn is not so richly ornamented nor as well constructed as the residence, nor is it in the best of condition today. The tiny, inadequate horse stall indicates that Captain Penniman was somewhat inclined to undervalue his horse in particular and farming in general.

D. Structural changes in the buildings

Professor Connally states, "The house is practically unaltered since its original state except for a few details." Progressive physical deterioration of both house and barn, however, is plain in the residence, the upper part of the Mansard roof leaks badly, and according to people who know, has done so for years. Pathetic attempts at repairs were made, ending in the ultimate recourse to the pan and bucket.

The upstairs bathroom, said to be the first one on the Cape, had been completely modernized and yet the modern fixtures occupy basically the same positions as the originals. Wallpapers, showing effects of roof leakage, have been changed through the years in most rooms -- some rooms do have the original paper. The ceiling in the diningroom has been replaced with fiber board panels. The floor in this room is modern oak overlying the old four and a half inch flooring.

E. General internal appearance of the house

All in all, there is nothing particularly striking in the house except for the attractive two-tone doors, the roof-top cupola, and the Captain's parlor.

We are indebted to the daughter, Bessie Penniman, for her hobby in photography and the light her work throws on the family life. A box of glass negatives, found in the house, were probably her work, for one of the negative boxes exhibits a "letter" written on the box, signed "Bess" and stating - "Ollie: Sorry that I did not get a chance to print and tone these. Keep them as long as you wish." These glass negatives, made mostly 1896-1898, show family life, an exterior greenhouse which no longer exists, and invaluable house interior shots. Particularly useful are photographs of the Victorian parlor.

This room, a description of which may be found in another section of this report, is the only remarkable internal feature of the Penniman house. If any attempt be made in the future to make the house into a museum, as was once proposed, the refurnishing of this room should be the sum of such an effort. An original sofa is there, and the rug (supposedly original), but little else beside the wallpaper and French made ceiling paper.

Some of the badly broken furniture in the attic and barn may be worth rebuilding, yet it is quite clear that the best of the furniture (as evidenced by photos made from the glass plate negatives) has long since disappeared. Hand carvings, pictures, scrimshaw and other objects, known to have been in the house, are either owned by Mrs. Broun or are on loan from them to the whaling museum in New Bedford.

In sum, the house shows a steady deterioration as the family fortunes declined. To be sure, the house was repainted on occasion, but not in recent years, and complete removal of the old paint will be necessary before roof shingling and repainting can be accomplished.

The big house is a far cry from the days when a visitor stated, "the Penniman home was the only establishment on Cape Cod similar to the homes he was used to in the cities, where entertainment was on a scale, lavish and gracious."

F. Closing Historical Statement

Captain Edward Penniman died in 1913, the house being willed to his wife, Betsey A. K. Penniman, who died in 1921. She in turn willed the property to Bessie Penniman, the daughter, who never married. Miss Penniman lived in this house until she died in 1957. Dr. and Mrs. Maurice Broun (Mrs. Broun is a grand-daughter) inherited the place and sold it to the United States government in 1963.

Beyond necessary repairs to both barn and house roofs and complete repainting, nothing further than "in place" exhibits of the buildings

is planned. That interest in the building increases can be attested by the Park Historian who lived in the Penniman house the summer of 1963; many visitors tramped through the yard, parked on the road, photographed the property and otherwise indicated their pleasure in viewing the Seashore's lone example of a way of life that is no more.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN

EASTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SECTION

1. Building Numbers 35-77 and 35-78
2. Captain Penniman House
Captain Penniman Barn
3. Restore the exterior of the House and Barn to the original color and finish, also to restore the fence around the yard.
4. Estimated cost of the work is \$12,000
5. The exterior only will be exhibited. This applied to both the House and Barn.
6. It is recommended that the Captain Penniman House be exhibited as an Exhibit in Place. The Exhibit will be interpreted with one or more panels established as roadside or trailside exhibits. Since this house is the only example of a Whaling Captain's residence, it will be an important part of the overall interpretive plan.

George M. Von der Lippe

George M. Von der Lippe, Acting Superintendent
Cape Cod National Seashore
October 1963

HISTORICAL STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN
EASTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

By

Arnold H. Gustavson

Landscape Architect

October, 1963

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Cape Cod National Seashore

Captain Edward Penniman House and Barn

A. Existing Conditions, House and Barn

1. The Captain Penniman house is placed on an artificial terrace on the south side of Fort Hill Road. A site about 200 yards to the south provided the earth for this terrace. On the north side, the terrace has been cut off about fifteen feet for widening of the Fort Hill road. Simple hitching posts, which have replaced the older, more ornate posts, may be seen here.

The front or west yard of the house is surrounded by remains of an original ornamented wooden fence. In the northwest lawn is the concrete socket of a flagpole mount.

A row of large cottonwood trees line the east terrace side, beyond the driveway. To the northeast of the house is a sperm whale jawbone gateway which forms an arch. The sperm whale jawbone replaced an earlier right whale jaw. The former green turnstile beneath these bones is now in the barn.

2. The barn: To the southeast of the house is a three-floor barn. A drive to the east of the house connects both the house and barn with the Fort Hill Road. Farm land southeast of the barn has grown up in brush and thickets.

B. Resume of house and grounds appearance during the historic period 1868.

1. An ornamental wooden fence surrounded the west (front) yard, lower terrace. Ornate hitching posts, a few of which are presently in the Penniman barn, lined the Fort Hill Road. The cottonwood trees bordering the east terrace driveway were brought back from Chicago by Penniman. (It is reported that all cottonwoods on the lower Cape came from this stock). A brick walk formerly ran from the back door north to granite steps and the Fort Hill hitching post area. On the front lawn rose a several-sectioned, high flag pole. A gateway, northeast corner of the lawn, was formed of a whale jaw (a right whale, with vertebrae). Underneath the jaw was a turnstile of green painted wood.

To the east of the present house lay the old Cape Cod Penniman house which was torn down after construction of the present residence. A picket fence existed at one time between the modern driveway and the farmed fields to the east.

Captain Penniman owned a horse and a cow, and farmed approximately six acres of land lying southeast of the house and barn.

C. Further research and costs

1. None

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I
ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION
ON
CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN
Cape Cod National Seashore

Prepared by
F. Cliff Pearce
Architect
February 1964

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

CAPTAIN EDWARD PENNIMAN HOUSE AND BARN

Cape Cod National Seashore

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Robert F. Gibbs
Superintendent

Date 3/9/64

Robert G. Hall
Chief, EODC

Date 2-28-64

Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. FOREWORD.....	i
II. STRUCTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN.....	
A. Principal Construction Materials.....	1
B. Special Features.....	2
C. Existing Conditions.....	3
D. Estimated Cost of Additional Work.....	5

PHOTOGRAPHS

I. FOREWORD

One of the most unusual and architecturally interesting houses in the Cape Cod area is the Captain Edward Penniman House in Eastham, Barnstable County. The house was built by the retired whaling captain in the Second Empire style from plans reputedly brought from France.

The refinement of the classic detail is noteworthy in comparison to the more simplified Americanized Victorian adaptations usually found in this period house. The fact that little change has taken place since the buildings were erected, make them more important historically and architecturally than those structures which have had many alterations and additions to the original fabric.

The interior is equally as important as the exterior. Very little has been changed or altered since the house was built. The Parlor with its flocked wallpaper and French ceiling paper is a remarkably preserved example of the period. The original painted and grained woodwork and doors are a record of a decorative period too often lost or concealed by progress.

Reroofing, repairs and painting will be the major requirements for the rehabilitation of the Penniman buildings. It is recommended that the structures be exhibited as a house museum after the necessary rehabilitation is completed. It would be an excellent example for students of history and/or architecture if it could be preserved and exhibited in its original state.

A set of measured drawings of the house was made by a student measuring team in the summer of 1962. The drawings prepared on Historic American Buildings Survey sheets for EODC are No. MASS-693 and consist of nine sheets. The drawings are not included in this report.

Norman M. Souder
Architect
February 1964

II. STRUCTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The house, a Mansard-roofed, wood frame structure is the Second French Empire style, was erected on a granite rubble stone foundation in 1868.

The first floor outer walls are clapboarded, with wood shingles on the lower part of the Mansard roof at the second story window level. The upper roof, over the attic, was originally covered with wood shingles. These have recently been replaced with asphalt shingles. An octagonal surmounts the apex of the upper hip roof.

Similar structures do not exist in the immediate vicinity and probably none exist in New England. Captain Penniman brought the plans, or ordered them, directly from France.

The house is two and a half stories with a cellar under the southwest portion. The barn is of similar construction.

A. Principal Construction Materials

The Penniman house is wood frame. Original specifications state that spruce, pine and hemlock were to be used. The foundation masonry consists of rubble stone, capped with granite above grade level. The house has two centralized red brick chimneys. The heavy wood doors have etched glass panels. Colored glass panels are set in the northwest bay (Captain's Parlor). The finished flooring is painted 4-1/2 inch pine plank, the dining room has a later cover of finished 2-1/4 inch hardwood. First floor doors are finished with painted wood graining. The main stair-

way has a mahogany bannister, typical of the period. Walls and ceilings are plastered and painted, or papered. Much of the original finish remains in the parlor. The red flocked wallpaper may be domestic, but the ceiling paper is definitely French import.

Hardware is cast iron, porcelain or bronze. Mantels over the false fireplaces are marble. The second floor bathroom is lined with tongue and groove boards.

The barn, or carriage house, is of similar Mansard roof construction, but is simpler in design than the house. It is wood frame, with rubble stone foundation. Poured concrete was added on the inside of the west foundation wall apparently as a stabilization measure.

B. Special Features

The house is painted yellow with white trim and a red roof. An 1880 photograph shows the wooden roof shingles at the second story level painted in five horizontal stripes of brown and red. The house was protected with lightning rods on the roof of the cupola. Some of the iron brackets which held these are still in place.

The outside corners are trimmed with wood quoin blocks. The main cornice is composed of wood brackets and dentil-fretwork moulding. The dormers are richly decorated with scrollwork and cornices matching the main cornice below.

The classic front entrance porch is supported by four Corinthian

columns and two pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The entablature has a cornice of dentil-fretwork and modillions matching the house cornice. The porch roof is topped by a classic wood balustrade.

The barn constructed about 1880 bears a superficial resemblance to the house in its Mansard roof and paint color. The cornices and dormers are very simply treated in contrast to the same features on the house. Some extra wooden brackets, left over when the house was built, were used to ornament a shed built after 1880.

C. Existing Conditions

The foundation walls, which are rubble stone set with mortar, are in fairly good condition and a minimum of pointing of the joints will be required. The retaining walls southeast of the house, have settled and the wall on the north side of the driveway should be rebuilt.

The wood framed exterior and interior walls seem to be in good condition and no structural failures are apparent. The upper part of the Mansard roof over the attic leaks badly, and apparently has for years. There are twenty or more pans and various receptacles spotted around in the attic to catch the drips from leaks in the roof. Most of the water seems to be coming in because of inadequate flashing at the change in pitch of the two roof surfaces and around the cupola and two chimneys. Completely new wood shingled roofs, at both the lower and upper levels, with adequate flashing will correct this fault.

As a consequence of the above leaks, the plaster ceilings in the two rear bedrooms on the second floor have been badly damaged by water seepage and should be entirely renewed after the roofs are resingled.

All exterior painted surfaces, except the wood and asphalt roof shingles, which will be renewed, must have the paint removed followed by an application of colorless wood preservative, a primer coat and two coats of house paint, in colors to match the original paint colors.

All of the present wooden gutters should be renewed with new mouldings to duplicate the profiles of the existing ones where these have cracked, broken or pulled apart.

New downspouts, of non-ferrous metal, should be installed.

All present window glass should be removed and replaced with new white lead putty, as the present putty is in very poor condition.

Present flat metal roofs and window wells should be replaced with non-ferrous metal.

New wood roof shingles should be given a coat of shingle stain to match the original colors.

The wood framed exterior walls and roof rafters of the barn seem to be in good condition and no major structural failures were apparent. The lower and upper Mansard roof surfaces as well as the roof of the ventilating cupola should be resingled. The eaves have serious cracks and rotted areas and should be rebuilt.

Clapboards on the east, north and west sides should be renailed where loose, and new red cedar clapboards installed where the present ones cannot be easily repaired.

The present asphalt shingles on the open wood shed, at the north-east corner of the barn should be replaced with wood shingles.

Wood shingles on the south wall of the barn should be replaced with new wood shingles stained to match the clapboard walls.

All present exterior painted surfaces must have the paint removed and be given wood preservative treatment and three coats of house paint.

The new roof shingles should have shingle stain to match the original colors.

The new wood shingles on the south wall should be stained the same as the new roof shingles.

Interiors of both the house and barn will remain untouched for the time being.

D. Estimated Cost of Additional Work

Additional research and architectural investigation of the structures will be required for the preparation of the Part II, Architectural Data Section of the Historic Structures Report. It is estimated that \$2500 will be required for personal services for the research and preparation of the report.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

The front, or west elevation of the Captain Edward Penniman house. The house as shown, remains basically unchanged. Note the classic entrance porch, wood quoins and finely detailed cornices.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4471



ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

The rear of house and barn from the southeast. This photograph illustrates the basic similarity of the two structures. The barn lacks the decorative quality given to the house in the treatment of cornices, dormers and corner trim. A dormer has been removed from this side of the barn and should be restored.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4472



ILLUSTRATION NO. 3

Detail photograph of a corner of the house
illustrating the corner quoins and the elaborate treatment
of the cornices.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4473



ILLUSTRATION NO. 4

A detail photograph of the wood quoin treatment at the corners of the house. Note the finely moulded edges of the quoins.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4474



ILLUSTRATION NO. 5

Interior view of East Parlor. The decorative treatment of this room appears to be original. Note the elaborate ceiling paper reported to have been sent from France. The unusual chandelier also is in character with the house and period.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4475



ILLUSTRATION NO. 6

Photograph of the barn and woodshed taken from the south. The shed is an addition to the barn but built within Captain Penniman's lifetime and should be preserved together with the house and barn. The simplicity of the treatment of cornices and dormers on the barn as compared with the same features on the house can be noted in this photograph.

Photo: Cervin Robinson, July 1962
EODC Neg. No. 4476

