

HABS
ME.

S. DAMARM

1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer

X

"GOVERNOR KAVANAUGH HOUSE"

Damariscotta Mills, Lincoln County, Maine

HABS
ME.

S. DAMARRM

OwnerDate of Erection

1803

Builder

James Kavanaugh

Present Condition

The house is square in plan with a low wing to the rear or north. It is of the central hall type. The carriage house, a low building extends to the west from the house. The first floor of the house is close to the ground.

The features of the exterior are:

- a. A semi circular porch with interesting doorway and side lights
- b. A fine Paladian window.
- c. An elaborate cornice supported by fluted pilasters.

The roof is hipped and surmounted by a look out of excellent design. Around the eaves is carried a guard rail of good detail.

Number of Stories

Two

Materials of Construction

Frame structure with granite foundation. Four brick chimneys. The front face of the house is flush boarded, sides and rear are clepboarded. Roof shingled.

Other Existing Records

Portland Sunday Telegram (clipping) March 11, 1928.

Additional Data

James Kavanaugh was a native of County Kilkenny, Ireland. He came to Boston about 1780 and moved to Damariscotta in 1790. He established stores, purchased the mill privilege at Damariscotta Mills, built saw mills, a grist mill, and a fulling mill. He also built vessels in which he shipped his own lumber to Europe.

James Kavanaugh and his business partner, Matthew Cottrill were among the early prominent Catholics of Maine. They probably sponsored the building of St. Patrick's Church in Damariscotta 1803-1808.

Edward Kavanaugh, son of James Kavanaugh, was prominent in political circles. He was a member of Congress 1831-1835; in 1843 was President of the Maine State Senate and the governorship becoming vacant that year, he became acting governor of Maine for the remainder of the year.

President Jackson appointed Edward Kavanaugh chargé' d'affaires at Lisbon to represent the United States at that court.

Charles E. Jannell

Approved:

Thomas J. Kelly

Date: January 7, 1937

TDW 4/7/57

JAMES KAVANAGH HOUSE

HABS
ME
8-DAMAR
1-

An Addendum to
Governor Kavanaugh House
Damariscotta Mills, Maine
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Address: State Route 213, Damariscotta Mills, Lincoln County,
Maine.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mrs. Fredric G. Richards.

Present Use: Residence.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This mansion was built in 1803 for James Kavanaugh,
prominent merchant and shipbuilder in Damariscotta
and Newcastle, Maine.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: James Kavanaugh; Edward
Kavanaugh; Winifred Kavanaugh; C. Perkins Gardiner; William Robinson
Cabot; Rear Admiral Fredric G. Richards.

2. Date of erection: 1803.

3. Architect: Nicholas Codd.

4. Notes on alterations and additions: Minor alterations
include redesign of closets and back stairs, bathroom fixtures and
kitchen equipment.

5. Important old views: 1857 map locates house as belong-
ing to Winifred Kavanaugh, series by O. M. Hopkins, published by Lee
& Marsh, Minor Street, Philadelphia.

6. Sources of information: William Leo Lucey, Edward Kavanaugh
(Francestown, New Hampshire; Marshall Jones Company, 1946), Chapt. I.
Federal Writers' Project, Maine, A Guide "Down East" (Boston:
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 220.

St. Patrick's Church, Newcastle, Maine, Sesquicentennial, 1808-
1958 (Damariscotta, Maine: The New Print Shop, [1958]). Copy at the
Skidompha Free Library, Damariscotta, Maine.

B. Historical Events Connected with Structure: James Kavanaugh was
a prominent member of the Irish Catholic settlement at Damariscotta.
He and William Cottrill formed a very prosperous trade partnership.

Father Jean de Chevr^erus (1768-1836), first Roman Catholic bishop of New England frequently visited here.

HABS
ME
8-DAMARM
1-

Once owned by Edward Kavanagh, acting governor of Maine, 1843. He became governor upon the resignation of Governor John Fairfield. He held this position until 1844, only 20 days before his death, January 21, 1844.

The house figured in the 1854 wave of prejudice; when warned of a threat to harm nearby St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, by serving as a storehouse of the church's valuables.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This mansion was built in 1803 and is an excellent example of early Federal architecture, exceptionally well detailed, notably for the Palladian window and interior trim.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 44'-6" x 80'-11". Two stories; rectangular and ell layout.

2. Foundations: Granite foundation walls, brick piers, hewn beams and joists mortised and tenoned.

3. Wall construction: Wood frame, lapped clapboard siding flush on front and side elevations. Fluted wood pilasters at corners.

4. Porches, stoops, etc.: Wood porch, semicircular. Two round wood columns, flat roof with balustrade; wood steps.

5. Chimneys: Four brick, cement wash at the cap.

6. Openings;

a. Doorways and doors: Entry doorway with semicircular head light, six-panel wood door.

b. Windows and shutters: Original wood double-hung sash, six over six light, Palladian window over entry. Original wood louvered shutters.

7. Roof:

a. Covering, shape: Asphalt shingles replace original wood shingles on hip roof. Wood balustrade at eave.

b. Cornice: Wood cornice, dentil brackets and dentil course.

c. Cupolas: Octagonal cupola with apex at front elevation, pitched metal roof, single double-hung window each side, six over three light. Wood Louvered shutters, two per opening.

HABS
ME
8-DAMARM
1-

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: First floor; four main rooms about stair hall. Prayer room at rear. Old house served as summer kitchen and quarters. Family entrance through "dingle" or enclosed porch. Second floor; four main rooms about stair hall. Second floor of appendage consists of two major rooms.

2. Stairways: Stairways between first and second floors, one to basement, and one to cupola and attic. Front and main stair circular stair. Nicholas Codd's name appears in ivory inset in stair newel.

3. Flooring: Wood plank flooring 6"-12" wide.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wall; Wallpaper on plaster, wood wainscot. Ceiling; plaster.

5. Doorways and doors: Finely trimmed doorways, with volute at baseboard. Simple heads.

6. Trim: Elaborate wood cornice in important rooms, shelves. Cupboard between living room and library.

7. Heating: Fireplaces in all major rooms, some hearths 8" x 9" clay brick pavers. Kitchen fireplace has hardware and Dutch oven. Central heating system.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: House faces east, situated on rise overlooking Damariscotta Lake and Damariscotta River.

2. Enclosures: Wood fence and gate at road.

3. Outbuildings: Stable, barn and privy; of interest.

4. Landscaping: Informal.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves
Maine Mid-Coast Project I
July 1960