

## HISTORIC RESOURCES – BUILDINGS AND SITES

Please send completed form to: National Register and State Register Coordinator,  
 State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development,  
 One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford CT 06103

\* Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Site / Building Name Peace Sanctuary / Akeley, Mary L. Jobe, House / Camp Mystic / Universal Peace Union

Artist / Writer Name Akeley, Mary L. Jobe Theme: Nature & Conservation

Street Address or Location 233 River Road

Town/City Groton Village Mystic County New London

Owner(s) Peace Sanctuary Trust, c/o Eunice Sutphen, 120 Cedar Rd., Mystic CT 06355  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Domestic: single dwelling; Recreation & culture: summer camp; Social / meeting hall & camp

Historic Use: Domestic: single dwelling; Landscape: park (land trust preserve)

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road?  Yes  No

Interior accessible?  Yes  No If yes, explain Land by permission; house not accessible to public

Style of building Colonial revival Date of Construction c. 1920

**Material(s)** (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone	<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten	<input type="checkbox"/> Stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone	<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding
<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		

### Structural System

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Frame	<input type="checkbox"/> Post & Beam	<input type="checkbox"/> Balloon	<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____				

### Roof (Type)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor	<input type="checkbox"/> Sawtooth
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input type="checkbox"/> Hip	<input type="checkbox"/> Round	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
(Material)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> Tin	<input type="checkbox"/> Slate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Shingle
<input type="checkbox"/> Built up	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		

Number of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions 20' x 40', 15' x 30' ell at west (rear)

Structural Condition:  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

Exterior Condition:  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

Location Integrity:  On original site  Moved When? \_\_\_\_\_

Alterations?  Yes  No If yes, explain: Kitchen ell extended at west side in the 1960s

**FOR OFFICE USE:** Town # \_\_\_\_\_ Site # \_\_\_\_\_ UTM \_\_\_\_\_

District:  S  NR If NR, Specify:  Actual  Potential

**PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)**

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

Barn  Shed  Garage  Carriage House  Shop  Garden  
 Other landscape features or buildings: Stone walls, foundations of former structures

Surrounding Environment:

Open land  Woodland  Residential  Commercial  Industrial  Rural  
 High building density  Scattered buildings visible from site

- Interrelationship of building and surroundings, landscape description:

See continuation sheet.

- Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

See continuation sheet.

Architect/Designer \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Maker \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

- Latitude, Longitude: 233 River Road: 41.365066, -71.97029 200 River Road: 41.364707, -71.96927

- Sources:

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 5/19/2014, 7/20/2014View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHPName Charlotte Hitchcock Date 8/31/2014Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic PreservationAddress 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

Threats to the building or site:

None known  Highways  Vandalism  Developers  Renewal  Private  
 Deterioration  Zoning  Other \_\_\_\_\_  Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

**HISTORIC RESOURCES – BUILDINGS AND SITES** continuation sheet**• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:**

The site of the Peace Sanctuary is located on the west bank of the Mystic River spanning both sides of River Road, south of the I-95 highway crossing of the Mystic River. The community of Mystic, a village in the Town of Groton, is to the south along River Road; the Mystic River Historic District encompasses the village area.

The Peace Sanctuary is made up of two parcels. A small parcel of .35 acre lies between River Road and the Mystic River; this is a long narrow piece of land with a wider area containing a small 1 ½-story gable-roofed house at 200 River Road. The 17' x 24' structure has two-over-two windows, vinyl siding, and asphalt shingle roof. The west eave-side faces the road and has a centered door flanked by windows. The east side faces the river and looks out to Mystic Seaport on the opposite bank. This small house is rented as a residential unit.

The larger parcel, 25.92 acres stretching for 1000 feet along the west side of the road, is 233 River Road. A sheer granite cliff rises from the roadside at the center of the site. At the northeast corner, a paved driveway enters the site through an opening in a stone wall. The drive heads west into the property, and curves toward the left as it rises up the hill to a plateau where the house is located. The land is almost completely covered by second-growth forest, but the remains of former structures can be found, including traces of the Peace Temple, later used as a dining hall for Camp Mystic; tennis courts for Camp Mystic; and other structures (described below under historical background). Outbuildings to the southwest of the house include a mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup>-century shed and garage.

A hiking path leaves the road near the entry drive and climbs south along the edge of the cliff to a look-out at the top. This has a view across the Mystic River, as does the east front of the house.

**• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*):****Architectural description:**

Inventory of structures (C – contributing, NC – non-contributing):

Main house	c. 1920	C
River house	early 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	C
Garage and shed	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC

**Main house:**

The main house is a 1 ½-story Colonial revival-style building with some Craftsman-style character. The gable roof of the main block, 20' x 40', has its ridge-line oriented north-south. A 15' x 30' ell extends west and contains the modern kitchen. The east eave-side is the formal front façade, with a central door and sidelights flanked by pairs of six-over-six double-hung windows. Three wall dormers in the upper level have six-over-six windows (recently replaced with modern sash). A stone patio with a retaining wall provides a spectacular view over the Mystic River. Although appearing as a front façade, this side has no formal access walk from the drive. Rather, the house is entered through three doors on the west side – two into the north and south rooms of the main block, and one into the kitchen ell. Siding is wood shingles; a brick chimney projects out slightly beyond the north end wall. Roofing is asphalt shingles.

The interior is not the center-hall layout that the east façade implies, but rather the main block was built as a single Great Room. More recently, it has been divided by a partition; the southern third of the block is a dining room and the larger room to the north is a large living room with the original massive fieldstone fireplace and flush wood-paneled walls and ceiling. Built-in shelving along the east wall holds books and some sculptures of lions by Carl Akeley. The effect is rustic Adirondack or Craftsman style.

The stair to the upper level runs westward from the living room into the ell, and makes a right angle turn to the left to reach an upper hall connecting a bathroom in the ell and two attic bedrooms in the main block.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:

1. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; women's history;
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

Theme: Nature and Conservation

The site has multiple periods of significance including its use for peace rallies by the Universal Peace Union in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, its time as Camp Mystic, operated by Mary L. Jobe from 1914 through the 1920s, subsequently as Mary L. Jobe Akeley's country home during the years she was writing her books on African wildlife and conservation, and since 1968 as a nature preserve established by Akeley's will at her death. The house represents an example of Colonial Revival-style design with some Craftsman details at the interior, adapted to the use as a summer camp gathering space while retaining its residential character. Akeley practiced at home the conservation goals that she promoted for Africa. Akeley's books reflect her leading role in modern conservation, as the focus of exploration changed from hunting and conquest to photography and habitat protection.

**Historical background:**

From the 1850s until the early 1900s, the site was owned by the Universal Peace Union, an organization loosely related to Quakerism, and annual peace rallies in August lasted three to four days, attended by up to 10,000 people. A wooden structure known as the Peace Temple included an enclosed section and a roofed open-air section.

In 1914, the Peace Union sold off the property. It was purchased by Mary L. Jobe, who established Camp Mystic as a summer camp for girls ages 8 to 18. Meals were served in the pavilion, formerly the Peace temple, the girls slept in canvas tent cabins to the west of the house, and the present house was built, with its Great Room large enough for use for camp programs.

Around 1930, with the Great Depression, the camp closed. During the next decades, Mary Jobe Akeley was occupied with completing the work she and her husband Carl Akeley (1864-1926), whom she married in 1924, had begun, the dioramas of the Hall of African Wildlife at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. She retained ownership of the property throughout her life, and in her will she established the Mary Jobe Akeley Trust to hold the property as a sanctuary, "for the preservation and protection of undisturbed natural conditions ... to be held for the public use for educational, scientific, and cultural purposes (Land Records)."

The sanctuary is managed for the trustees by the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center of Stonington, as a preserve open to the public for walking and nature study. The two units of housing are rented.

**Artist background:**

Mary Lenore Jobe (1878-1966) was born on an Ohio farm, but evidently to a family of means, as she attended Scio College, in New Market Station, Ohio. She went on to Bryn Mawr College, and to Columbia University for a master's degree in history and English. Her great love was exploring, and she went on numerous expeditions to the Canadian Rockies, mapping the mountains and studying the Native American tribes. She was responsible for documenting several unmapped areas and was elected to the Royal Geographical Society in 1915.

Mary L. Jobe purchased her land in Mystic between 1914 and 1920, and started Camp Mystic for girls. She believed strongly in education for girls that included swimming, life-saving, riding, arts and crafts, nature study, dancing, and "Indian Masque." A camp brochure from 1921 shows the various facilities and activities, while the 1934 Fairchild aerial photographs of the area show the main house, dining pavilion, and tent cabins still in place, although the camp ceased operation in 1930.

As part of her program, Jobe invited scientists to lecture at the camp. Carl Akeley was one of these; she had met him during the off-season in New York and visited his laboratory at the Museum of Natural History. She went on to become his second wife in 1924. Together they planned an expedition to Africa in 1926-27 to collect specimens for the museum displays. They were acutely aware of the rapid changes occurring in Africa as human settlement was advancing into natural areas and wildlife being hunted to extinction. Their mission was initially to hunt and collect

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animal specimens and landscape backgrounds for museum displays that would represent in a natural-looking way the wonders of African wildlife. They also adopted the mission of conservation – educating the American public about the vanishing wildlife of Africa and also promoting the establishment of national parks to protect habitats. The volumes written by Mary Jobe Akeley after Carl's death (on their first joint expedition), repeatedly tell of their regret at killing the animals they treasured, although they felt it necessary to complete the educational mission.

She went on to work as the advisor to the Museum of Natural History through the completion of the Hall of African Wildlife (opened in 1936), she made additional expeditions to research animals and peoples of Africa, and wrote a series of books about Africa in support of conservation goals.

**Architectural and cultural significance:**

The site has multiple periods of significance including its use for peace rallies by the Universal Peace Union in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, its time as Camp Mystic, operated by Mary L. Jobe from 1914 through the 1920s, subsequently as Mary L. Jobe Akeley's country home, and since 1968 as a nature preserve. The extant house is an excellent example of Colonial Revival-style design with some Craftsman-style details in the interior. During the years of the 1920s to the 1950s, Akeley wrote a series of books describing her travels to Africa to document vanishing wildlife and changing patterns of human settlement. She also worked as advisor to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City to complete the Akeley Hall of African Wildlife after the 1927 death of Carl E. Akeley. Meanwhile, she practiced conservation at her own property in Mystic. Akeley's books reflect her leading role in modern conservation, as the focus of exploration changed from hunting and conquest to photography and habitat protection.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock, 7/19/2014.

Interview with Maggie Jones, Director of the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, 7/19/2014, at the site; Camp Mystic brochure courtesy of Maggie Jones.

**Map resources:**

Town of Groton Assessor's Records & GIS Viewer: <http://maps.groton-ct.gov/apps/GrotonViewer/>  
Parcel IDs: 261914348607 E, 261914442695 E. Land Records Vol. 239, Page 75 (establishing Peace Sanctuary).

Aerial views from: <http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 8/31/2014.

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC:  
[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical\\_maps\\_connecticut\\_towns.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html) .

USGS Historical Maps at <http://historical.mytopo.com/> accessed 8/31/2014.

UTM coordinates: <http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html> .

**Print and internet resources:**

Akeley, Carl E. Field Museum, Chicago, IL web site <http://www.fieldmuseum.org/carl-akeley> accessed 7/19/2014.

Akeley, Mary L. Jobe.

Restless Jungle. Robert McBride & Co., New York, 1936.

The Wilderness Lives Again. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1940.

Akeley, Mary L. Jobe, collection, Mystic River Historical Society.

Akeley, Mary Jobe. Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, inducted in 1994. <http://www.cwhf.org/inductees/arts-humanities/mary-jobe-akeley#.VGpmYPnF98E>

Connecticut State Library online: [iconn.org](http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories) or <http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories>

Carley, Rachel. Creative Places: Modern Arts and Letters in Connecticut. Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation & State Historic Preservation Office, 2014.

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. Sound View Press, Madison CT, 1999.

Kimball, Carol W.; Streeter, James L. and Comrie, Marilyn J. Images of America: Groton. Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

Mystic River Historical Society. Images of America: Mystic. Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

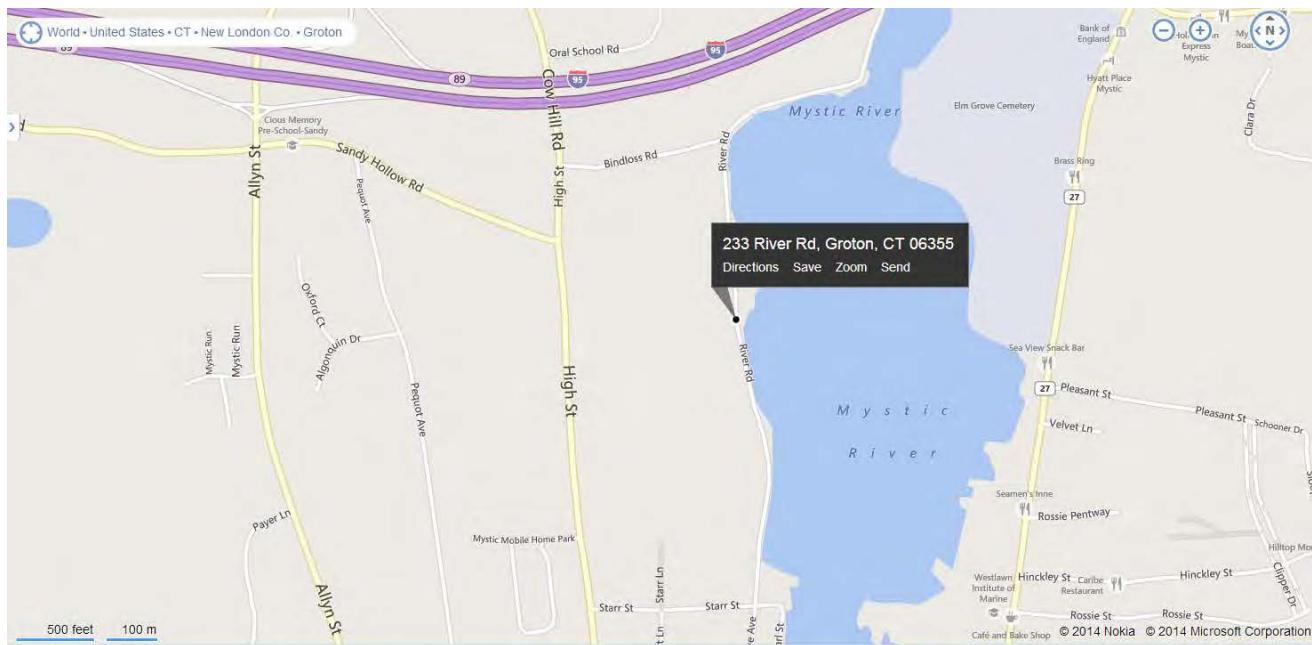
Polk, Milbry. Tiegreen, Mary. Women of Discovery: a celebration of intrepid women who explored the world. Clarkson Potter/Random House, New York, 2001.

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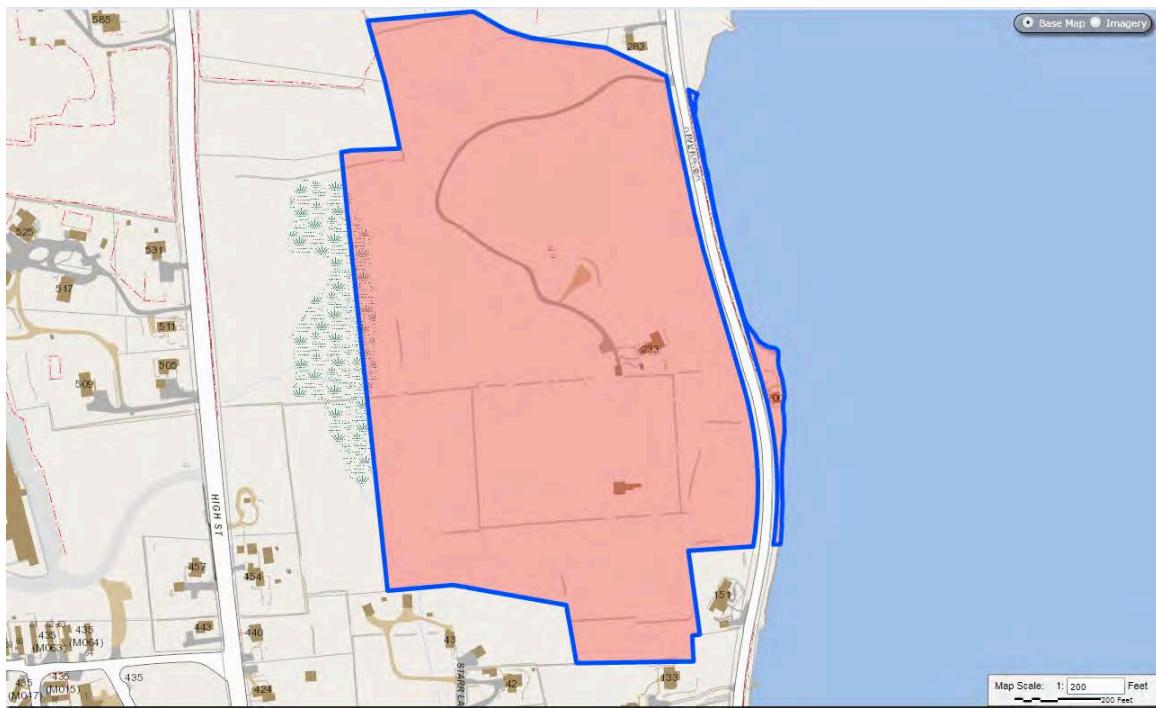
233 River Street, Mystic, Groton CT Record

No. 44.2139

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1. Location map of 233 River Road, Mystic, Groton CT – from <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 8/31/2014.



2. Parcel map of 200-233 River Road, Mystic, Groton CT – <http://maps.groton-ct.gov/apps/GrotonViewer/> accessed 8/31/2014.

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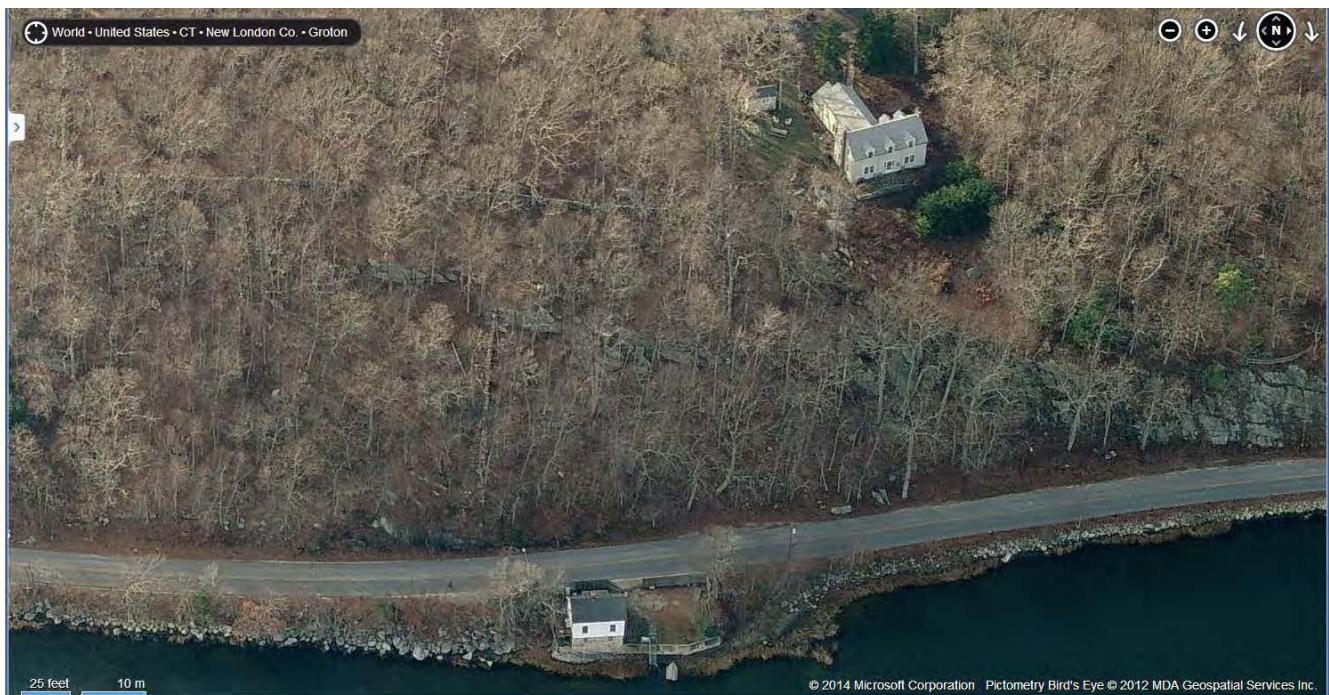
233 River Street, Mystic, Groton CT Record

No. 44.2139

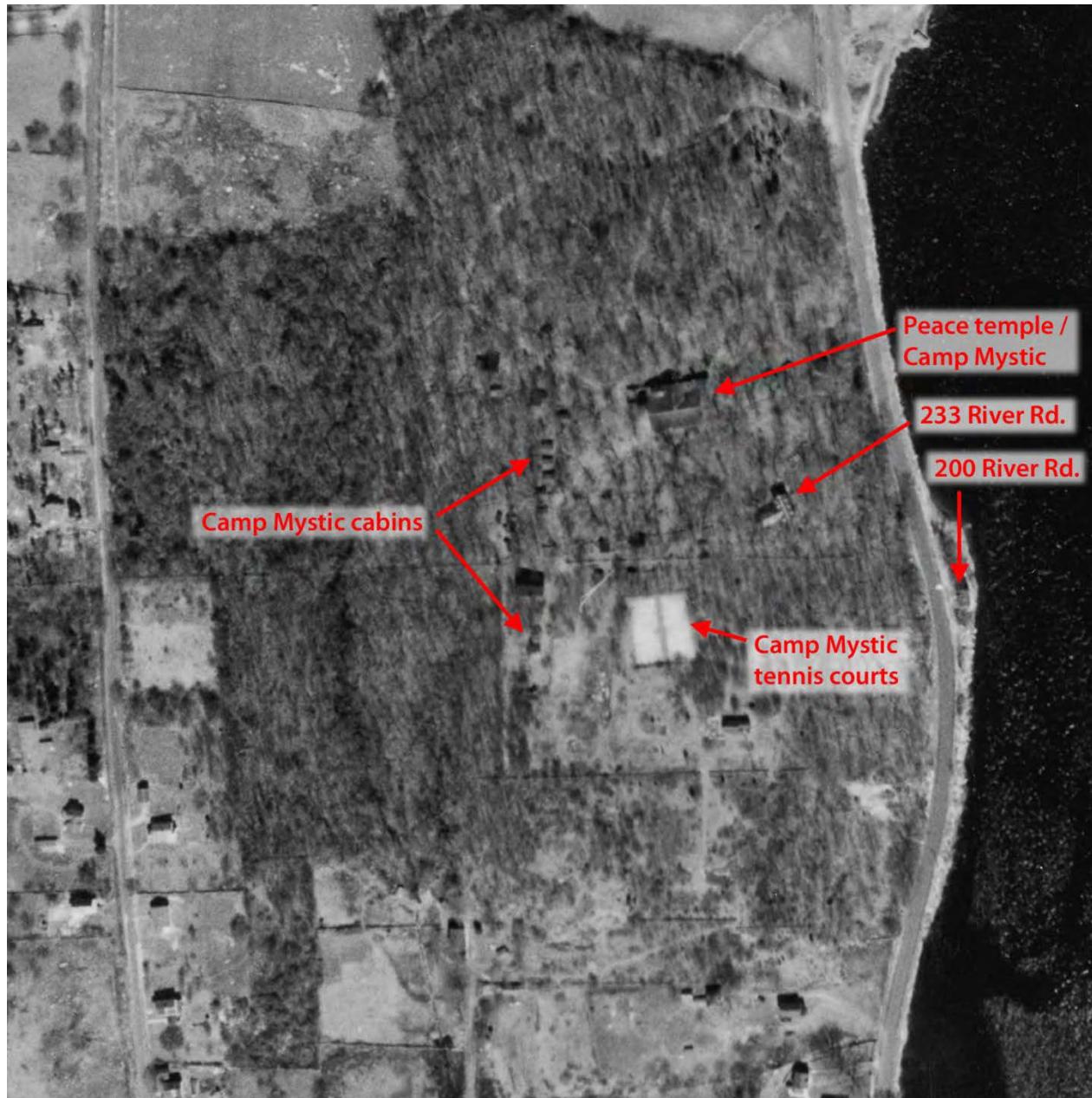
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3. South view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of 200-233 River Road, Mystic, Groton CT – <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 8/31/2014. 233 River Road is at center and 200 River Road at lower right.



4. East view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of 200- 233 River Road, Mystic, Groton CT – <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 8/31/2014. At right is the dramatic cliff along the road.



5. Detail of 1934 Fairchild aerial photograph showing the site shortly after the closure of Camp Mystic, with most of the camp facilities extant. Base map from [http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/magic\\_6/raster/37800/aerial/1934/00035\\_to\\_01384/CT1934\\_00316.pdf](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/magic_6/raster/37800/aerial/1934/00035_to_01384/CT1934_00316.pdf).



6. East view of main house, camera facing west.



7. Southwest view of main house, camera facing northeast.



8. Northwest view of main house, camera facing southeast.



9. West view of main house, camera facing southeast.

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10. Interior view of main house Great room, camera facing northwest.



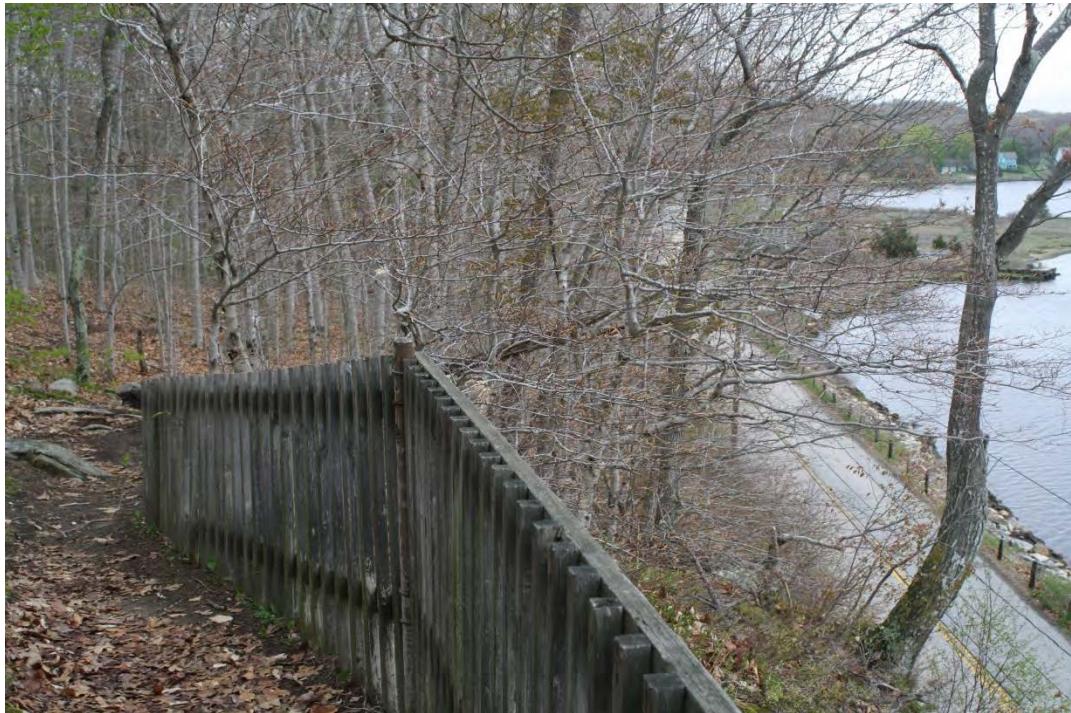
11. Interior view of main house Great room, camera facing northeast.



12. Interior detail view of main house Great room shelf above windows, camera facing east, showing sculpture by Carl Akeley.



13. Northwest view of house at 200 River Road, camera facing southeast.



14. View of lookout at the cliff-top, camera facing northeast. River Road is below right.



15. East view of the entry drive to 233 River Road, camera facing northwest.



16. Northwest view of the Peace temple, early 20<sup>th</sup> century; courtesy of Mystic River Historical Society, Inc., Mystic Connecticut.



17. Mary L. Jobe on horseback, c. 1910; photo from the Mary Jobe Akeley collection, courtesy of Mystic River Historical Society, Inc., Mystic, Connecticut.



*All meals are served in the spacious tree shaded pavilion overlooking the salt water*

18. Dining pavilion, from 1921 brochure for Camp Mystic; collection of Maggie Jones. The dining pavilion was re-purposed from its days as the Peace temple.



*Camp Mystic girls know the joy of living under friendly trees*

19. Typical tent cabin, from 1921 brochure for Camp Mystic; collection of Maggie Jones.



20. Carl Ethan Akeley (left) & Mary L. Jobe Akeley (right) at their Klipspringer Camp, 40 miles west of Nairobi, Kenya, 1926; from *The Wilderness Lives Again*.



THE SKIN OF THE BIG BULL GIRAFFE IS HUNG UP TO DRY IN THE WORK CAMP ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF KENYA COLONY

21. Mary L. Jobe Akeley at left, with the giraffe skin, Kenya, 1926; from *The Wilderness Lives Again*.



22. Carl & Mary Akeley with a group of Lumbwa lion spearmen, Tanganyika, 1926; from *The Wilderness Lives Again*.



(Upper) Mrs. Akeley watches her chance to photograph hippos in the Crocodile River.

23. Mary L. Jobe Akeley watches her chance to photograph hippos, 1935; from *Restless Jungle*.



Mary L. Jobe Akeley

24. Mary L. Jobe Akeley pumps up a flat tire while photographing lions, Kruger National Park, 1935. The Akeley camera, a movie camera invented by Carl Akeley, is mounted on the front of the car; from *Restless Jungle*.



THE AUTHOR, MARY L. JOBE AKELEY, IN 1940

25. Mary L. Jobe Akeley, portrait in 1940; from *The Wilderness Lives Again*.