

Henry Bisbing House

103 Military Highway, Gales Ferry, CT



Henry Singlewood Bisbing (American, 1849-1933) was an American artist who specialized in traditional paintings of cows and landscapes. This excerpt from his 1933 obituary reviews his career:

He was widely known for his paintings of animal life, specializing in cattle, and received medals in a number of countries. He had been practically retired more than 20 years. A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Bisbing was born Jan. 31, 1849. He was a student at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts and studied in Paris and Brussels. Much of his life was spent in France, where he was particularly well known for the quality of his work. He was awarded medals in the Paris salon in 1891 and 1896, the World's fair at Chicago in 1893, and the Paris exposition in 1900. He was also awarded medals in London, Dresden, Vienna and Antwerp, one of the medals being presented by the Queen of England for his work in an exhibition, it being the first occasion when an American's work was recognized in that particular gallery. The medal will be placed with the body when it is committed to rest.

¹ Author's own photograph from 2026



“Lapsing Waves on Quiet Shores” 1892

Mr. Bisbing was a friend of American artist Charles Harold Davis, who settled in Mystic in 1890. While visiting Mr. Davis, the Bisbings found the area around Long Cove very attractive; they bought land from the Julia A. Adams estate and moved to Gales Ferry in 1910.

The Day

Sat, Apr 23, 1910 ·Page 8

Bisbing Home Progressing.

J. Bennett Colesberry of Philadelphia, the architect, who designed the handsome permanent residence which the artist, H. Singlewood Bisbing, is to build near Red Top, was entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Bisbing the first of the week. The work on the cellar walls is progressing rapidly under the direction of the builders, the Marquardt Brothers of Groton.

The Bisbing house is of **Shingle style**, a uniquely American style that represents a rebellion against Victorian fussiness. It was very popular in the Northeastern United States between 1874 and 1910 and Shingle house are often found in seashore areas such as Cape Cod and the Maine coast. The most obvious feature of a Shingle Style home is the generous and continuous use of wood shingles on the siding as well as the roof. The exterior is generally asymmetrical, and the interior floor plan is often open. The less formal exterior of the shingle style plan allowed for a free-flowing – and open – floor space. The rows of windows allowed for plenty of light and a more irregular and casual layout of rooms. The rooms could now open out onto the covered porches – bringing the outdoors in. The overall look was a more informal yet also graceful home design.

Features of shingle style architecture include:

- Shingled walls and roof

- Wide, covered porches

- Small sash or casement windows with many panes

- Asymmetrical exterior

The Bisbings moved into their house in 1911.

The Bulletin
Sat, Jan 14, 1911 ·Page 10

Artist and Mrs. H. Singlewood Bisbing, who removed here from Philadelphia a year ago, took up their residence in their new home near Red Top last week.

In 1913, Mrs. Bisbing bought more land from the Adams estate, described below:

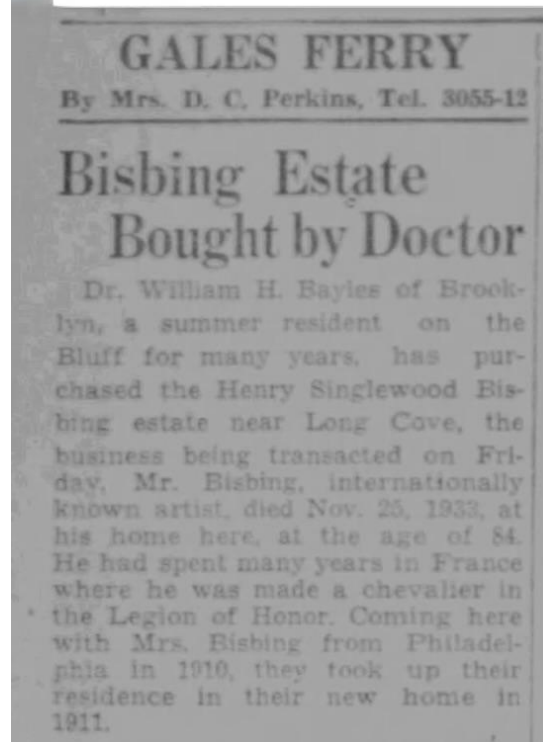
The Day
Wed, Oct 18, 1916 ·Page 9

The sale was perfected Monday of the Adams property on the east side of the New London road, from the H. S. Bisbing estate to the property of Charles H. Brown on the north. The sale was made by Mrs. Fanny A. Malthrop of Gale's Ferry and her brother, David G. Adams of New Haven to Mrs. Amelia Coryell Bisbing, and covers the rights to the Adams mill pond, the ice pond formerly leased by the Crystal Lake Ice Co. of New London.

Mrs. Bisbing died in 1924. Mr. Bisbing died in 1933 at the age of 84. The couple had no children, and the estate was left to humane societies in Philadelphia and Boston.

The house and land were bought by Dr. William Bayles in 1935, who was familiar with Gales Ferry from summers spent at the Bluff.

The Day
Tue, Jul 09, 1935 ·



Today, the Henry Bisbing house has stood at 103 Military Highway for 125 years and retains its Shingle style. It has a presence while simultaneously blending into its surroundings, as intended by its original architect, builder, and owner.

Sources:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/shingle-style-architecture-american-spirit-178047>

<https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/shingle-style>

<https://www.theplancollection.com/blog/what-to-look-for-in-shingle-style-home>

newspapers.com, New London Day