

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 02001273 Date Listed: 10/29/02

Thatcher, Henry Knox, House Somerset ME
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for 
Signature of the Keeper

10/29/02
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Area(s) and Criteria

Military is the appropriate area of significance that corresponds to the house's historic associations with Admiral Thatcher under Criterion B. Architecture is not intended as an applicable area of significance and has been deleted.

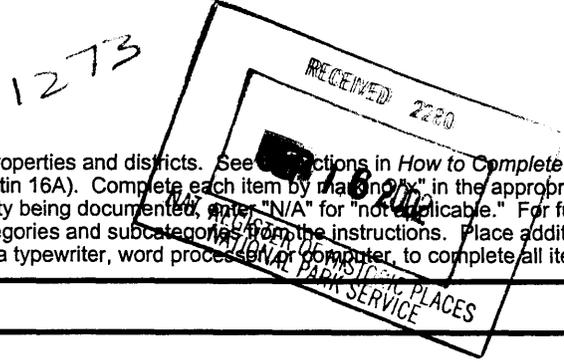
This information was confirmed with Christi Mitchell, National Register Coordinator, MESHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Henry Knox Thatcher House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Corner of Old Route 2 (Main Street) and Elm Street N/A not for publication

city or town Mercer N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Somerset code 025 zip code 04957

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carol A. Peterson SHPO 9/12/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] 10/29/02
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

THATCHER, HENRY KNOX, HOUSE
Name of Property

SOMERSET CO., MAINE
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / Single Family Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / Single Family Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
EARLY REPUBLIC / Federal
MID-19TH CENTURY / Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Stone / Granite
walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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DESCRIPTION

The Henry Knox Thatcher House is a transitional Federal/Greek Revival two-and-a-half story clapboarded house, overlooking the town from a low hill on the eastern edge of Mercer, Maine. Constructed in stages starting as early as 1818, the west facing, timber framed dwelling features a five bay facade, cut granite foundation, and asphalt roof. The centered front doorway is flanked by four sidelights and set in a plain Greek Revival trim. Six-over six windows are located on both floors to the sides and top of the door way. Band molding on the windows, narrow corner boards and frieze, and a boxed cornice complete the ornamentation on the house. Both the north and south gable ends contain two six-over-six windows on each floor and a fifth at the attic level. The frieze and cornice are present on all four sides of the house, creating a pedimented gable at the attic level on each end.

Attached to the center of the eastern exterior wall is a low posted ell which extends to the east; to the north side of this ell is attached another ell (stables) and woodshed. (A narrow, windowless alley is formed between the north wall of the ell, the east wall of the house and the west wall of the stable.) Awkward roof lines and signs of previous exterior siding on the now enclosed northeastern wall of the ell indicate that the stable postdates the ell. The stalls have been removed to allow for automobile parking.

The interior is that of a traditional New England center hall house: a parlor and dining room open to either side of the front hall. The back of the house contains three rooms, each half as deep as the front rooms, and spread almost equally across the entire width of the house. Currently, the upstairs southeast room has been converted into a bathroom. Originally, each of the rooms, with the exception of the center back rooms, had a fireplace, however, most of them have been blocked from use, and in the northeast rooms on both floors the surrounds, mantles and openings have been completely removed. It appears that the kitchen was always located in the ell: none of the rooms in the main house contained a cooking fireplace. The ell is centered on the back of the house, directly behind the hall, and it opened off a lobby area that was accessible from all four downstairs rooms and the hall. The original interior features of the ell have been completely lost with the exception of a partition wall that divided the structure into two rooms. Historic photographs indicate an exterior door was located on the south side of the ell which led into the early kitchen. Observations by a restoration carpenter who worked on the ell indicate that there had been a fireplace along its north wall, but this was subsequently moved to the middle of the room and the chimney repositioned to rise through the ridge of the roof.

The front rooms on both the first and second floors are trimmed with Greek Revival stylistic details. Decorative raised panels located below the upstairs windows elongate and formalize the openings. The fireplace surrounds, baseboard, chair rail and door trim all feature Greek Revival

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mouldings. On the first floor the doors in the front of the house contain five panels with applied Greek ogee moulding. The rear rooms, however, exhibit features from an earlier period. The remaining fireplace in the southeast room is trimmed with ogee and bead molding and carries a gracefully flared Federal mantle. The trim and doors in both these back rooms are also Federal in design, as are the four-light side-lights next to the front door. Although the precise time frame is unknown, it is likely that the rooms were finished or refinished in stages, with the majority of the work representing the occupation of Henry Knox Thatcher, and the remaining Federal details having been installed by his predecessors.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Military
- Architecture
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

C.1826 - 1860

Significant Dates

1826

1832

1860

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Rear Admiral Henry Knox Thatcher, 1806 - 1880

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Campbell, Joseph, Housewright

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Henry Knox Thatcher House in Mercer, Maine, was the on-shore residence of a career Naval officer whose prominence in the Navy during the nineteenth century rivaled that of his grandfather, General Henry Knox, in the Revolution. Thatcher was the son of Lucy Knox Thatcher (daughter of General Knox) and Judge Ebenezer Thatcher. The family originally resided in Thomaston Maine, where Henry Thatcher attended school before enrolling in West Point in 1822, and joining the Navy in 1823. In 1829 Judge and Lucy Thatcher purchased a lot in Mercer, upon which they built the Ingalls house (NR 75000110) seven years later. Henry's earliest visit to Mercer is unknown: Naval records indicate he was at sea frequently during the years 1824 to 1829. In December 1931 he married Susan Crosswell of Mercer, and the following year purchased the house at the corner of Beech Hill Road and Elm Street. It was to this property that Henry Knox Thatcher returned during his leaves and furloughs as he rose through the Naval ranks from mid-shipman to Commander over the next 38 years. This property is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for as the residence of Rear Admiral Henry Knox Thatcher during the majority of his military career.

The Henry Knox Thatcher House is two story, twin chimneyed, center hall, transitional Federal and Greek Revival home, located on a rise at the edge of Mercer. An early deed to the property, recorded in 1818, makes no mention of buildings on the lot. Eight years later two transactions combined two adjacent lots from the Estate of Cyrus True, and Joseph and Hannibal Ingalls, which were then sold to Joseph Campbell, a Housewright. At the time of this \$300 transaction True's lot contained 'buildings thereon'. When Joseph Campbell sold the 2 ½ acre lot to Thatcher in 1832 it included a dwelling house, carpenters shop and all the buildings, and was \$200 more expensive. It is likely that the building Joseph Campbell originally purchased is now the small ell at the back of the current structure. As a Housewright he would have had the skills to frame and / or finish the large Federal style structure in front before selling it to the Thatchers. On the interior, only the back first floor rooms retain Federal features; the remainder of the structure is detailed in the Greek Revival style that gained popularity during Thatcher's ownership, and thus reflects his tenure of the property most strongly.

Thatcher's career in the Navy spanned almost five decades. Prior to establishing his residence in Mercer in 1831 he had already attained the rank of acting master on the schooner *Porpoise* in the West Indies. The following year he was promoted to Lieutenant, and prior to becoming an inspector at the Charleston Navy Yard in Boston (1841 to 1847), he served on three additional ships, the *Falmouth*, the *Erie* and the *Brandywine* in the West Indies and the Mediterranean. Between 1847 and 1860 Thatcher continued to alternate shore jobs with time at sea:

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While attached to the sloop *Jamestown* (1847 - 50) he engaged in food relief to Ireland and protected American interests in the middle sea during Europe's political upheavals. He commanded the storeship *Relief* (1851-52) in supplying the Brazil Squadron and was executive officer of the Philadelphia Naval Asylum (1854-55). After promotion to commander in 1855, he was skipper of the sloop *Decatur* (1857 - 59) protecting American filibusters in Central America; he thereafter served as exec of the Boston Navy Yard. (*Reynolds, p. 354*).

A memorial to Thatcher delivered two years after his death analyzed the amount of time he spent at sea and on land. "At the date of his death, April 5, 1880, he was 73 years, 10 months, 10 days old, and had been attached to the Navy fifty-seven years. Twenty-one years eight months of this time were spent at sea, ten years and eight months on shore duty, and twenty-four years and six months unemployed; but nearly twelve years of the "unemployed" time he was on the *retired list*." (Preble, p.). In addition to 'shore duty' in Charleston and Philadelphia, there are many periods when he was between ships or 'waiting for orders', and these are the times he was home in Mercer. Real estate transactions in 1832, 1833, 1844, 1853 and 1860 place him in Mercer, as do the 1840 and 1850 censuses. In 1844 Thatcher started the Somerset and Franklin Odd Fellows Lodge No 21. He also held shares in the local tannery, mill pond and mill, and was involved with the Congregational Church located next door to his house. Although he may have been a part-time resident as a result of his frequent voyages, his home was in Mercer.

The Thatchers sold the property to Hiram Knowlton in 1860, and left Mercer. For the first two years of the Civil War, Thatcher patrolled the Mediterranean on the *Constellation*, after which he was promoted to Commodore and sent to the Gulf Coast aboard the *Colorado*. Over the next three years Thatcher was instrumental within the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. He led a division in attacking Fort Fisher in North Carolina before assuming command of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron as acting Rear Admiral. During the final year of the war Thatcher attacked Mobile and accepted the Confederacy's surrender on the Tombigbee River. He then went on to blockade the Texas coast, occupy Galveston, and was then given the command of the Gulf Squadron. After the war, Thatcher was made the Rear Admiral of the North Pacific Squadron, until his retirement in 1868. As a 'retired officer' Admiral Thatcher was the Port Admiral and station commander in Portsmouth from 1869 - 1870.

Although Thatchers most distinguished accomplishments and promotions occurred during the Civil War, the first thirty years of his career were not without merit. Indeed, the period during which this Maine native resided in Mercer corresponds with his steady success at sea, and advanced administrative positions on land; the combination of which culminated in the talent, experience, and maturity required of an Admiral.

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Preble, George Henry. *Henry Knox Thatcher, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy*. (Boston: David Clapp & Son), 1882.

Deeds, 1818 - 1860. Somerset County Registry of Deeds, Somerset County Courthouse. Skowhegan, Maine.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is fully described by the Town of Mercer tax map # 11, lot 4.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property represents the full extent of the dwelling house lot as purchased by Henry Knox Thatcher in 1832 and 1853.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 3
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
February 26, 2002
West facade; facing east.

Photograph 2 of 3
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
February 26, 2002
South elevation, facing northwest

Photograph 3 of 3
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
February 26, 2002
Interior, dining room; facing southeast.