S FI Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

	Hon. William Cohen						
•	STATE:						
	Maine						
	COUNTY:						
	Penobscot						
	,						
	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE					

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM	FOR NPS USE ONLY				
270	ENTRY NUMBER DATE				
(Type all entries — complete applicable sections)	JUN 4 1973				
NAME	<b>00</b> ,, -				
COMMON:					
West Corinth AND/OR HISTORIC:					
1 4					
Skinner Settlement, Corinth Village Land Students					
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	in progress No				
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
🔀 Agricultural 🔲 Government 🔲 Park	☐ Transportation ☐ Comments				
	Other (Specify)				
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious					
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☐ Scientific					
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Penobscot County Registry of Deeds	•				
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#### **KEY STRUCTURES**

Corinth in 1793 with his grown sons, Asahel and Elijah and four other children. They began clearing this farm and built a log cabin across the road from the present farmhouse, which was built about 1810-1815. In 1805 Daniel and Asahel acquired title to 200 acres of land, including the present 50 acre homestead and adjacent land. Daniel and Elijah farmed and kept tavern, living first in the log house and later in the farmhouse which is presumed to be the first or one of the first frame houses in the settlement.

The farmhouse is a 1½ story Cape Cod with front entry flanked by twin parlors, each with its own chimneys and fireplaces. The chimneys appear to be original, with no evidence of an earlier central chimney. A large dining room behind the entry hall and parlors was the original kitchen with a seven foot wooden mantel over a fireplace with bake oven. Small bedrooms lead off from the old kitchen, each with fireplaces backing onto the parlor chimneys.

The present kitchen, in the ell abutting the main house, was converted from a rear entry room while the pantry behind it was the former buttery. The front entry stairway leads to an upstairs hall and four bedrooms, all with sloping roofline on the eaves side. Fireplaces have been removed from the upstairs bedrooms while downstairs fireplaces have been covered over.

The wide board floors are intact throughout the main house as are the four panel doors and most of the original hardware which family tradition attributes to Mason Skinner, carpenter, blacksmith, son of Daniel.

Various furnishings in the house, including a grandfather's clock, were brought to Brewer, Maine by the Skinner family from Massachusetts in 1787 and moved again to Corinth in 1793.

The present 40' x 60' barn was raised on June 20, 1873 to replace two smaller barns. The master builder was Royal A. Sweet, a local blacksmith and wagon maker who also built the nearby Robyville covered bridge. The ell connecting the house and barn was altered during the Civil War period as was the foundation and possibly the roof overhang of the farmhouse. The farmstead buildings are representative of the attached house-ell-barn architecture that prevailed in rural Maine after the Civil War.

The farm has remained in the Skinner family from first settlement to the present day. George Skinner, son of Elijah, brought the farm to its highest degree of cultivation during his tenure from 1850 to the early 1900's. He was responsible for building the barn and altering the foundation and ell. Only minor changes have been made since that period so the farmstead presents a good picture of an inland Maine farm as it had evolved by the second generation after settlement.

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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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- 2. Second Corinth Methodist Meeting House This church is a product of the frontier revival movement of the 1830's and 1840's. It was begun in 1845 and dedicated in 1849. It is a country Greek Revival clapboarded structure, 34' x 42', with double entry doors. Original floors and pews are in excellent condition. The pews have a rather unusual open ended armrest in an Empire style. Matching choir lofts are placed over each entry way. The church is still heated by two large wood-burning box stoves which have been in use for a century. The only major alteration was the addition of a metal ceiling in 1899.
- 3. Hodsdon General Store Town assessment records indicate that the store was built about 1830 by Isaac Hodsdon, who was then a clerk of the Penobscot County Judicial Court and was living in Bangor.

It was probably run by Hodsdon's brother Nathan until Nathan's son, Charles, bought it in 1856. Charles Hodsdon ran the store until 1908. About 1870 he raised the roof in the ell attached to the store and made a second story 17' x 32' social hall over the downstairs feed and grain room. This hall saw intensive community use for birthday parties, oyster suppers, "5 cent sociables", lectures and dialogue plays and as a meeting place for the Good Templars temperance lodge after the Civil War and into the present century.

In 1916 Peter Lyons bought the store and converted the hall into living quarters by putting in two partitions in the hall and building a bedroom closet out onto part of the stage and laying of hardwood floors over the original wide board floors.

The store is very much in its original condition. The wide floors and two slant front counters remain as do the wrought iron ceiling hooks. Front windows have been enlarged and four side windows covered over with shelves extended over the former window openings. A central chimney has been relocated at the rear of the store. Exterior clapboards on the store are buttlapped by hand. Store dimensions are 17' x 27'. Woodwork in the store has just been repainted a pale green. Ceilings and floor are undergoing restoration. The store has been in continuing operation from about 1830 until the summer of 1972 and will be reopened in the spring of 1973 with emphasis on the sale of items sold there in the 1870's as shown in the Hodsdon store ledgers from that period (Charles Hodsdon's store ledgers are intact from 1856 to 1900).

4. District No. 2 Schoolhouse - The schoolhouse lot was purchased by the district in 1859. The present 24' x 32', one room schoolhouse may have

## Form 10-3004 6 (July/1969) APR NATIONAL (Number all entries)

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. DESCRIPTION

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built at that time or moved from an earlier location nearer the church. Original windows on the south side of the schoolhouse have been replaced with a set of six windows. Interior changes are slight. A painted blackboard covers most of the north wall and a schoolhouse wood heater still provides the heat for the building. The District No. 2 school was established at the first Corinth Town Meeting in 1812. The building is presently owned by the West Corinth Community Club and is used for public suppers, Rod and Gun Club meetings and general community purposes.

5. General Isaac Hodsdon Farmhouse - Isaac Hodsdon is an outstanding example of how an ambitious youth of the early 19th century could use the militia as an avenue to success. Hodsdon came to Corinth as a blacksmith in 1809. He taught the first town school in the Skinner Settlement in 1812 and joined the militia during the War of 1812. He became the first postmaster of Corinth in 1819 and was appointed as Deputy Marshall to take the 1820 census in the area. In 1821 he was made a clerk of the Penobscot County Judicial Court and moved to Bangor where he lived until 1839. He continued to own property in Corinth, including the Hodsdon store. Hodsdon rose in the Maine militia and was the Commanding General during the early Aroostook border difficulties. In 1839 he returned to private life and moved into the house he had recently built in Corinth.

The Hodsdon house is a central chimney 1½ story Cape Cod. Five fire-places remain about the main chimney but otherwise the interior has been considerably altered. The original front door which faced the Meeting House, ¼ mile to the east, has been covered over on the exterior (the door and casing remain on the interior) and entry is now from the ell.

The Hodsdon farm was sold to Joseph B. Wheeler in 1850 and remained in the line of family descent until 1960. Wheeler was a prominent local farmer, Justice of the Peace, Town Selectman and member of the Maine House of Representatives in 1873. At least four of his diaries are in existence and give details of farm life in Corinth in the 1860's and 1890's.

- 6. Skinner Tayern The Skinner tayern house was built in the same period as the Skinner farmhouse. It is a 1½ story Cape Cod with connected ell and small barn. Three gables were added and chimney alterations made after the Civil War. The house contained a bar room and small chambers for the accommodation of overnight guests. Its tayern use probably terminated in the 1850's. The interior of the house has been extensively altered.
- 7. Alvin Skinner House This is a very good example of a popular style of the 1840's and 1850's. It is a 24' x 32' Greek Revival house built in

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DESCRIPTION

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1847 by Alvin Skinner, a brother of George Skinner. It stands on the site of an earlier log cabin occupied by Asahel Skinner until his immigration to Ohio in 1816. Alvin Skinner was a cooper and storekeeper who died in 1861 at the age of 50. Several letters from his wife and daughter after their immigration to California in 1865 remain. An unusual surviving document relating to this house is the contract between Skinner and a Levant, Maine stonemason for digging of the cellar and laying up of the split granite foundation for the house.

The recessed front entry of the house is original while a kitchen extension and side porch have been added. Moderate interior changes have been made, including the removal of the kitchen fireplace and chimney.

#### SUPPORTING STRUCTURES

- 8. Nathan Hodsdon Farmhouse This structure was probably built in the 1840's by Hodsdon and was the residence of his son, Charles, who ran the farm and operated the store across the road for the latter half of the 19th century. The attached ell and barn date from Charles Hodsdon's tenure while the second barn was moved in this century from the plot adjacent to District No. 2 schoolhouse.
- 9. Elbridge H. Bragdon Farmhouse A front entry ½ story Cape Cod probably dating from the 1830's. The house occupies the lot immediately north of the Hodsdon store. A bay window has been added to the south end of the house and the entry may have been modified. The exterior is in good condition although the attached ell and barn verge upon collapse.
- 10. George Eddy House and Cooperage Lot This small house adjoins the Hodsdon store lot on the south and is of undetermined age, probably predating 1850, and according to oral tradition is one of the oldest frame houses in the Skinner Settlement. Isaac Hodsdon's blacksmith shop was located on this lot and was later converted into Alvin Skinner's cooper shop.
- 11. Jacob Wheeler House This house stands at the junction of the old County Road from Bangor and the "Cross Road" to the "Valley Avenue" from Bangor to Corinna. Jacob Wheeler bought this property from Asahel Skinner, his brother-in-law, in 1802. Wheeler was the father of Joseph B. Wheeler. Wheeler's step-son, Enoch H. Bragdon, remodeled the house during the Civil War period, adding the only slate roof in the Skinner Settlement. The attached barn was lost in a fire in the 1940's but the slate roof spared the house.

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#### 7. DESCRIPTION

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12. John C. Sweet Farmstead - This is another 1½ story Cape Cod farmhouse with attached ell and barn. Sweet bought the property about 1840 from Richard Palmer, original settler of the farm and son-in-law of Daniel Skinner. The barn was the last barn to be raised in the neighborhood. It was put up in 1908 but its dimensions and mode of construction are scarely different from those raised a half century before. Sweet was the father of Royal A. Sweet, whose house and wagon making shop were on the northwest corner of the Sweet farm on the present George Brown home site between the church and the schoolhouse.

PERIOD (Check One or More as A	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
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SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable	e and Known)		
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	ck One or More as Appropriate	»)	
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The life of most 19th century farming frontiers centered around a loosely defined crossroads village within a decade of settlement. These rural hamlets effectively met the trading and social needs of the pioneer society and grew in size and complexity apace with the changing needs of the total agricultural society.

The usual first elements of the crossroads "Settlement" were a black-smith shop and a rudimentary store. A variety of other services were often added by farmer-craftsmen who came as settlers and brought such skills as tanning, shoemaking or coopering. When population growth justified the formation of a town government, the building of a common schoolhouse was a first order of business. The schoolhouse became another component of the settlement. In the early stages of frontier society, whatever formal religious services that were held, were conducted in the private dwellings by the settlers themselves or by itinerant preachers. A Meeting House for the exclusive purpose of religious services was an amenity that usually came in the second generation after settlement. It served as a bench mark of a maturing society that was prosperous and ambitious enough to build an imposing church and support a resident minister to tend the religious needs of the community. The churches were also located in the dominant settlements in the town.

One of the settlements in a town usually became dominant as the century progressed and became the seat of town government. The addition of a Town Hall to the cluster of commercial and residential buildings was a crude yardstick of the transition from crossroads settlement to rural village. The village might then continue to grow toward an urban stage or stabilize as a rural trading and social center serving a limited local area. The remaining settlements in the town either completely lost their identity or became a stable center of a restricted community and experienced a gradual decline that was not complete until the coming of the automobile in the present century.

The crossroads village society was a norm for 19th century rural America. The attitudes and customs of that society formed the matrix culture of our nation as it embarked on a period of great expansion and

(See Continuation Sheet)

9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOG	RAPH	ICAL RE	FEREN	CES										
	Assessors Records, Town of Corinth, Books No. 1-4.															
	"History of the Second Corinth Methodist Church", unpublished manuscript.									pt.						
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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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8 IISIGNIFICANCE

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change. Urbanization and westward immigration drained eastern farming areas of population which was only partially replaced by an infusion of an entirely different sub-culture brought by immigrants from abroad. Much of American History is the record of adaptation to these forces by rural society in the East or when transplanted to the West. Yet until recently historians and sociologists have given little attention to the crossroads village society as a cultural unit. An awareness is now developing of our vernacular roots just as the physical remains of early America are rapidly vanishing. Historians and architects are showing increasing interest in the day to day life of the common working man and the "Vernacular architecture" in which he lived and worked.

The identity of most rural hamlets has been lost due to physical decline or alterations attendant to progress. The State of Maine is fortunate in having crossroads villages which survive in sufficiently unaltered form to show their former appearance and function. This patrimony cannot long resist the impact of change and indifference. The preservation of surviving crossroads villages should be seen as a matter of increasing urgency.

The Skinner Settlement Association has been formed to undertake the preservation and partial restoration of a representative 19th century inland Maine crossroads village and associated farm. The village was known as the Skinner Settlement or Corinth Village until about 1900 and is generally known today as West Corinth. It is located some twenty miles north of Bangor in Penobscot County.

The Skinner Settlement arose from the arrival of Daniel Skinner as the first permanent settler in the Town of Corinth in 1793. The growth of the settlement followed the usual pattern. Skinner opened a tavern in his log dwelling shortly after coming to Corinth. Isaac Hodsdon, subsequently the commander of the Maine Militia in the Aroostook border difficulties, became the first resident blacksmith in the settlement a decade after Skinner's arrival. Prior to the immigration of Hodsdon, residents in the Skinner Settlement had to travel to neighboring settlements for blacksmithing. There is no record of the first store in the Skinner Settlement but the likelihood is that the Skinner Tayern doubled in that capacity or that Hodsdon maintained a small store before he built a larger store about 1830. The Hodsdon store survives very much in its original condition. The first schoolhouse was built in the Settlement in 1811 with Hodsdon serving as the first school-The present one room schoolhouse was built later in the century and is a few hundred feet removed from the original site. The Methodist Meeting House in the Skinner Settlement was dedicated in 1849, a product of the revival movement which swept through Maine in the 1830's and 1840's.

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The Skinner Settlement was one of four settlements in the Town of Corinth. It was surpassed in importance by the Hunting Settlement, the present village of East Corinth, by the 1830's when the town's first church and the Town Hall were built there. While the other two settlements rapidly declined and lost their identity before the Civil War, the Skinner Settlement continued to flourish as a center of commerce and social activity for its immediate area. It even experienced some growth with the opening of a second store (and the addition of social halls over both stores) and a combined blacksmith shop and carriage factory. The latter engaged in the building of wagons and sleds for the woods trade. A cooper shop had also served the Settlement from about 1820 until the Civil War while the small village industry stage was passed through in the 1830's with a shop employing several workers in the manufacture of oars.

The Meeting House and store have remained in use until the present time, although the volume of traffic in both have declined. Six dwelling houses remain occupied, two less than in the previous century. The Skinner Settlement is still a cohesive community with virtually the same boundaries and external appearance as a century ago.

The crossroads village served and in turn depended on the farms within and adjacent to its amorphous boundaries. A crossroads village preservation effort should thus contain a 19th century farm as an element of the whole. A central goal of the Skinner Settlement Association is the acquisition and restoration of the Skinner Farm to its post Civil War operation condition. The farm is adjacent to the Settlement and has passed through five generations of Skinners to the present. The Skinner Farm restoration project is further evidence of the increasing interest in vernacular 19th century culture and the growing living historical farm movement in this country and Canada. Skinner Farm is particularly worthy of restoration to an earlier operating condition because of the continuity of family ownership from original settlement to the present and due to an outstanding collection of Skinner family papers which reflect changing conditions of life on this representative Maine family farm. A major component of the papers is a diary collection of George and Sarah Skinner, farmer and wife on the property during the second half of the 19th century. These diaries give a remarkable insight into the everyday life on a small Maine farm during a half century of transition. They provide, in conjunction with other manuscript material, the basis for an extremely accurate reproduction of daily and seasonal activity on the farm and in the community.

The Skinner Settlement Historic District affords a unique opportunity to the State of Maine to preserve and restore an example of a 19th century

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Penobscot	
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STATE

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#### 8. SIGNIFICANCE

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crossroads village as a functioning unit. The main components of the village are already committed to a restoration or preservation effort. The minister and governing body of the Methodist Church have assured their cooperation in the endeavor. The Hodsdon store is now being restored as an operating general store in the same period as the Skinner Farm restoration. The one room schoolhouse is owned by a community club which uses it for occasional suppers and Discussions are in progress to find a means of providing an alternate structure for this community use that would allow preservation of the schoolhouse in its original form. The Skinner Settlement Association holds an option on the Skinner Farm and is pursuing a fund raising program aimed at acquisition of the farm by the spring of 1973. The district contains an authentic example of a 19th century crossroads farm and village as it evolved from initial settlement to a mature rural community. Continuity of existence assures the integrity of the whole and avoids the pitfalls inherent in even the most careful assembly of components designed to create the effect of a typical village or farm. 14 151

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)  1. NAME		
	Skinner Settlement,	ALIN 4 1973
West Corinth	Corinth Village	23/019 <b>JUN 4 19/3</b>
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Maine	Penobscot	Corinth
STREET AND NUMBER		
Kenduskeag-Exeter Mills Road		
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE	DATE	SCALE
Maine Historic Preservation		151/18
Commission	April 29, 1970	1" = 2000 ±
REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW		RECEIVED
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