



7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wadsworth Hall in Hiram is a large simple Maine farm house of the early nineteenth century. It was erected for General Peleg Wadsworth between 1800 and 1807 by Stephen Jewett, a carpenter and Theophilus Smith, a mason. Both men came from the nearby town of Cornish.

Few eighteenth or nineteenth century Maine farm houses can compare in size with Wadsworth Hall. It has a massive granite foundation and stands two and a half stories high with a gable roof. The entire structure is of wood. A large brick chimney projects near either end of the gable roof. The facade is unusual for its great length. On the first story is a central doorway with a later nineteenth century portico and double doors. At either side of the doorway is a window. To either side of the doorway is a window. To either side of these windows is a pair of windows. Thus, there are seven bays to the first story facade instead of the five normally found on a Maine farm house. The second story of the facade displays one less bay than the first. Over the doorway is a pair of small windows. At either side of these is a pair of larger windows. All the facade windows and most of those on the rest of the house have shutters and have been altered to two over two sash.

The left side of Wadsworth Hall possesses a large entrance to the cellar near the front of the house. The first, second, and half stories each have three windows. The right side of the house has a similar treatment. The first, second, and half stories each have two windows.

A long, two part wooden ell extends from the rear of the right side of the house. The first section of the ell is a full two stories and has a gable roof. On the first story is a doorway with three windows to its left and two windows to its right. A simple, probably later nineteenth century porch runs from the ell doorway to the front of the house. The second story of the ell has a series of four windows. The second section of the ell is a smaller two story structure with two doorways and two windows on the first story and two small windows on the second story. Behind the house are several nineteenth century barns and outbuildings.

The rugged simplicity of Wadsworth Hall's exterior is continued on the interior. The central room on the first floor is a large square space with a high ceiling. It is completely finished in unpainted pine boards with plain Federal style doors and doorway moldings. General Wadsworth had this huge room created for town meetings, civic and social functions, and especially for drilling the local militia during inclement weather and the winter months. The high ceiling enabled the militia to drill with their rifles. The remainder of the first story rooms have plain Federal style woodwork and normal ceilings. To compensate for the high central room, the second floor central hallway is quite low, and there are short flights of steps down into the bedrooms. Plain Federal style woodwork is also found in the second floor rooms.

( See Continuation Sheet )

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maine	
COUNTY	
Oxford	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JAN 21 1974

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

Wadsworth Hall has survived basically unspoiled in one family for almost a century and three quarters. Although some changes occurred during the nineteenth century, these did not alter the force of the Hall's size and simplicity.



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1735-1737

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this piece of Maine history and rural Maine architecture cannot be overrated. The Peleg Wadsworth House is a very simple country house. Its significance as a piece of local architecture lies in its simplicity.

Far more important than the fact that the house is an early nineteenth century house are the personages connected with the history of this home. General Peleg Wadsworth, builder of the house, was born at Duxbury, Massachusetts, on May 6, 1748. He moved to Portland, Maine some time after his graduation from Harvard College in 1768. His Revolutionary War service spanned the whole war period. At the expedition against the fortress at Castine in 1779, Wadsworth was in command of the land forces that did accomplish a landing on the peninsula of Castine. Although this expedition proved disastrous to the Americans, the General was exonerated of any wrongdoing in the affair.

On February 18, 1781, General Wadsworth was taken prisoner by the English at Thomaston, Maine. He was imprisoned at the fortress at Castine and realizing that he was to be sent to England, he made good his escape two months after his capture. He made his way to Portland but found that his family had gone to Boston, where he joined them later.

Following the war, General Wadsworth built the brick house on Congress Street in Portland. This house built in 1785-86 is now known as the Wadsworth-Longfellow Mansion and is owned by the Maine Historical Society. In 1790, General Peleg Wadsworth was granted 7800 acres of land extending from the Ossipee River to the Saco River in appreciation for his long service during the Revolution.

The construction of Wadsworth Hall was not begun until 1800 and the General did not move in with his family until January of 1807 when work on the house was completed. In 1808, the house in Portland was given to Stephen and Zilpah (Wadsworth) Longfellow, the parents of the poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Teg, William Hiram, 1941

Edwards, George Thornton, The Youthful Haunts of Longfellow,  
Portland, Maine, George T. Edwards, 1907

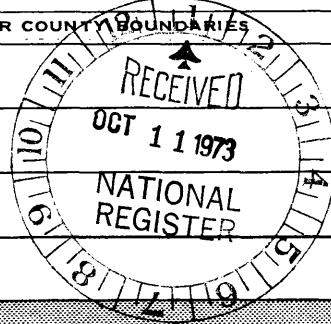
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"		
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 3/4 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Farle G. Shettleworth, Jr. & Richard D. Kelly

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission      DATE: Sept., 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta,      STATE: Maine      CODE: 23

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National     State     Local

Name James H. Mundy

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date October 9, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. B. Montrose  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 1/21/74

ATTEST:

Ronald W. Guenberg  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 1/16/74

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Maine	
COUNTY	Oxford	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE

As General Wadsworth was Hiram's most prominent citizen, his house was often times used for town meetings and various other functions. The room for this purpose was a very large room with a very high ceiling. The room was built in this fashion so that General Wadsworth might drill the militia indoors during inclement weather and during the winter months.

General Wadsworth was the maternal grandfather of the Poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. As a youth the poet spent many of his summers at his grandfathers house in Hiram.

The house is owned today by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Douglas, an elderly couple who live on the farm in much the same fashion as did the General. Mrs. Douglas was a Wadsworth and this home has never left the family.

Not only the house is important but also of significance are the barns, outbuildings and nearby fields. The entire farm complex is an unspoiled area which is completely isolated from the outside world.

Driving south from the village of Hiram on the west side of the Saco River one comes to Wadsworth Road. Turning off one then ventures approximately one half mile over a dirt road through tall pines. The road was built on a "horseback" so that there are steep drop offs on either side of the narrow way. Upon reaching the farm which is nestled in a bowl made of low surrounding hills one realizes that he has just entered another world; he is back in the early 19th century. The automobile was out of place in the farmyard.

Arriving at the farm we saw Mr. & Mrs. Douglas bringing in their fall harvest as generations of their family had done before them. They live on and take from the land in the manner that has always been at Wadsworth Hall. The Wadsworth Cemetery was next to the field in which the Douglasses were working. Here is buried General Peleg Wadsworth along with many of the members of his family and many of his descendents.

There is no telephone communication between this farm and the world outside. This is a total unspoiled farm of the 19th century, in very good condition and still being worked. This alone would be enough to give this spot recognition even if it had not been the home of General Peleg Wadsworth and a favorite haunt of his famous grandson.

