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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAR 25 1978  
DATE ENTERED APR 26 1978

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  Dinsmoor-Hale Mansion

AND/OR COMMON Hale Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Southwest corner at intersection of Main Street and  
Winchester Street

CITY, TOWN Keene VICINITY OF Second

STATE New Hampshire CODE 33 COUNTY Cheshire CODE 005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME State of New Hampshire, Keene State College

STREET & NUMBER 229 Main Street

CITY, TOWN Keene VICINITY OF STATE New Hampshire 03431

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, Cheshire County Registry of Deeds  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER 12 Court Street

CITY, TOWN Keene STATE New Hampshire 03431

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Plan

DATE 1970  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS New Hampshire Department of Resources & Economic Development

CITY, TOWN Concord STATE New Hampshire

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dinsmoor-Hale House remains on its original site at the southwest corner of Main and Winchester Streets in Keene, New Hampshire, as a symbol of the splendor of former days. Its finish is white-painted stucco over brick. Previously, it was buff color with dark brown trim.

When the three-story, Italianate-style house was being built for former Governor Samuel Dinsmoor by Buss and Woodward, contractors, the Keene Sentinel reported, "This will be one of the most elegant homes in the county."<sup>1</sup> After its completion in 1860, it was richly furnished and had one of the largest libraries in Cheshire County. The mansion was surrounded by several acres of well kept lawns and shrubbery and had an attractive barn and carriage house.<sup>2</sup> By 1870, a 125-foot long greenhouse and large grapery had been added.<sup>3</sup> An original granite border separates the lawns from the street and large decorative stone posts still stand at the entrance of the circular drive.

The building is an elaborated square in plan, with a recessed and balconied entrance bay capped with a small gable which rises above a small open entrance porch. Decorative moulded enframements and drops which once defined the narrow central bay have been replaced by simpler trim. The original balustrade of the porch roof has also been removed. The south side of the facade is subsumed in a semicircular bay, extending the full height of the wall. In contrast to the mass of the building, the projecting bay is articulated with rustication at the first level; flat pilasters with Corinthian caps separate the second floor windows, while the third floor windows have rounded heads to follow the line of semicircular arches which "rest" on the pilasters.

A small wing projects from the rear portion of the south elevation; the interior stairwell located on the north side of the building, is emphasized by a slight recess, in the interior wall, and narrow, twin, round-arched stained glass windows. Foundations are of granite. The composition roof is a square hip in plan surmounted by a small balustrated, open belvedere, and enlivened by a semicircular projection over the south front bay and a small gable over the entrance bay, twin chimneys, with applied arcading, are placed on the middle north and south sides of the roof.

The house has been put in condition for modern use as the administrative offices of Keene State College; thus some of the original features have disappeared, although enough remain to allow Hale House to retain its architectural importance as well as its historical significance.

One distinctive feature of the building is the open well, double-run staircase with landing and heavy mahogany railing and newel post, untouched by renovators or painters. At the staircase landing two tall arched windows hold leaded stained glass. The original second-floor central hallway remains intact.

Massive outer and inner front doors of the vestibule are original. Windows are two-over-two, double sash, with semicircular arched heads on the first floor, and segmental heads on the second. The third floor windows are smaller and plainer with flat lintels.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Physical Appearance, continued.

There are exceptionally high ceilings on the first two floors, archways in the front hallways heavily trimmed with solid mahogany (now painted) characteristic of its period, colonettes on each side of a former drawing room fireplace with tiled facing and hearth, and tall columns flanking windows and doors in the former drawing room, now partitioned into offices, to the right of the downstairs hallway. Decorative ball motifs embellish edges of the ceilings and wind around fireplace colonettes and window and door columns. Chandeliers that once hung in the downstairs hallways have been replaced.

The former dining room, now the registrar's office, retains four built-in corner china cupboards with beveled glass in the two arched windows in each door. One cupboard holds the old safe where the family silver was stored. Original paneling below the windows remains.

The house was acquired by Keene State College in 1909.

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<sup>1</sup>Keene History Committee, "Upper Ashuelot," A History of Keene, New Hampshire, (Keene, NH: City of Keene, 1968), p.38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.388.

<sup>3</sup>S. G. Griffin, A History of the Town of Keene (Keene, NH: Sentinel Printing Company, 1904), p. 605.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Keene State College <sup>1</sup>		
				Administrative Offices		

SPECIFIC DATES      1860; 1909; 1969      BUILDER/ARCHITECT ---

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The parcel of land on which Hale House stands was originally part of Thomas Wells' land holdings, after the return of the settlers to Upper Ashuelot (Keene) in 1749. In 1783 Wells sold a plot of seven rods frontage and sixty rods in depth to Major William Todd, later an innkeeper at the nearby Ralston Tavern. The land was sold to Elijah Dunbar, lawyer, in 1804; to his father-in-law, Alexander Ralston, in 1807, and several years later to Phineas Fiske with a clause inserted to provide for the reservation of enough land on the north side of the lot to build a road, now Winchester Street.<sup>1</sup>

The house first erected on the lot was removed sometime after 1854 by Governor Samuel Dinsmoor and construction began in 1860 on the present House.<sup>2</sup> In addition to its aesthetic distinction, Dinsmoor-Hale House is also noted as the home of two New Hampshire governors.<sup>3</sup>

Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr. called the "younger governor" because he was the son of Governor Samuel Dinsmoor, Sr., was born in Keene in 1799. He entered Dartmouth College at eleven and graduated when he was fifteen. He went to Europe on family business at an early age and learned to speak French fluently. Upon returning to Keene, he was admitted to the bar at nineteen. A man of prominence in Keene affairs, he was the first cashier of the Ashuelot Bank and later became its president. In 1826 he was made clerk of the State Senate and in 1849 became the state's governor, serving three consecutive terms. He died in 1869.<sup>4</sup>

A humorous incident relating to the governor's residence at Hale House was told by W. H. Ellis, who as a boy used to drive the neighbors' cows to pasture every morning and home again at night. The young lad charged two dollars each for the season. Governor Dinsmoor made the comment that he "couldn't pay no two dollars for his cow" but would drive them himself for a dollar. The next day the Ellis boy's father went to the governor's house to tell him all the neighbors would let him take charge of driving their cows for a dollar. The governor backed off and at the end of the season he paid the boy his two dollars without a word.<sup>5</sup>

The second governor to live in the mansion was Samuel W. Hale, who was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in 1823, and came to Keene in 1859. With Stephen Osborne he established the South Keene Chair Company and later the Ashuelot Furniture Company. He was active in banking and railroading, being one of those who promoted the building of the Manchester and Keene Railroad and of the Ashuelot Railroad. He assisted in organizing the Second Congregational Church in Keene and gave \$20,000 toward the building of its edifice.<sup>6</sup>

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Keene History Committee, "Upper Ashuelot," A History of Keene, NH, Keene, NH: City of Keene, 1968.

Griffin, S.G., A History of the Town of Keene, Keene, NH: Sentinel Printing Company, 1904.

Pamphlet No. 1, Collections of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, NH, April, 1930.

Keene Alumni Bulletin, Vol. 18, No. 3, (Winter, 1967).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8
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7	2	2	1	5	0
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4	7	5	6	1	6	0
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 

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D 

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Marjorie Whalen Smith, Author, Historic Homes of Cheshire County and Marion Wood, Vice President of the Alumni Association

ORGANIZATION Keene State College Alumni Association

DATE March, 1975

STREET & NUMBER 229 Main Street

TELEPHONE 603-352-1909, x304

CITY OR TOWN Keene

STATE New Hampshire 03431

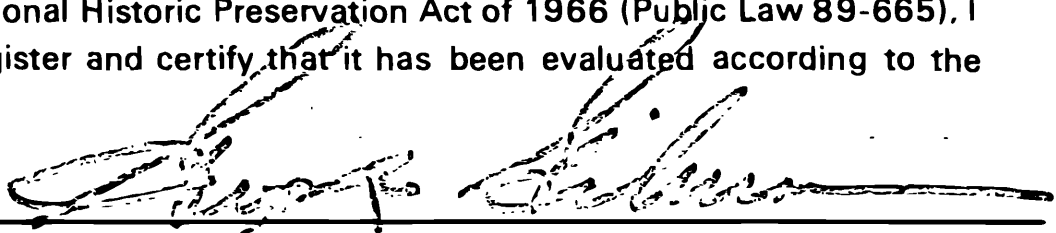
## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE NH State Historic Preservation Officer  
Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

DATE September 22, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 9/26/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9-23-76

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Significance, continued.

Hale is said to have made many lavish changes on the interior of Hale House as well as building a large barn and erecting a long greenhouse with a grapery near its west end. Elaborate fences surrounded the estate and drives were built throughout the grounds. The third floor of the house was finished off with skylights and odd pinnacles for use as a studio and billard room.<sup>7</sup>

Hale was a representative to the state legislature in 1866-67, a member of the governor's council, 1869-70, and was elected governor of New Hampshire in 1883. At the time he was governor, a disastrous fire destroyed his furniture shop, forcing him into bankruptcy. He soon sold his home to Theodore Vail who allowed the Governor to continue occupancy until Hale's death on October 16, 1891, at the age of sixty-nine. Governor Hale was survived by a widow, a son and a daughter.<sup>8</sup>

After Vail's death, the property was returned to Hale ownership by Mrs. Emma Hale, the Governor's daughter-in-law. She later sold to Nathan and Mary Woodbury, and in 1909, Mary Woodbury deeded the property to the city of Keene which in turn conveyed it to the State of New Hampshire for a normal school.<sup>9</sup>

The first floor rooms of the main house became administrative offices and classrooms for the new normal school. The first floor of the ell was used for home arts classes. Rooms on the second floor were classrooms and those in the ell were used for manual training. Assemblies were held on the third floor and at the first commencement exercises over two hundred people were seated in the room. Ells of the house were removed when Fiske Hall was built in later years.<sup>10</sup>

Later, the third floor held facilities for the art department and the second floor was converted into a library. Bedroom walls were removed to make large arches between the former rooms. When a new library became available, the second floor was turned into faculty conference rooms. Administrative offices have since replaced these conference rooms.<sup>11</sup>

In 1969 when the alumni of Keene State College were asked to choose a symbol that brought to mind pleasant memories of their Keene college experience, they chose Hale House.<sup>12</sup>

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Significance, continued.

<sup>1</sup> Irving S. Heath, History of Keene State College Campus (Thesis under the Supervision of the National Youth Administration, 1940-41), p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>3</sup> Keene History Committee, "Upper Ashuelot," A History of Keene, New Hampshire (Keene, NH: 1968), p.387.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.386.

<sup>5</sup> Pamphlet No. 1, Collections of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, New Hampshire (April 1930), p.13.

<sup>6</sup> Irving S. Heath, op. cit., pp.5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Keene Alumni Bulletin (Keene, NH: Winter 1967), Vol. 18, No.8, p.5.