

Form 10-300
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire	
COUNTY: Rockingham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Matthew Thornton House (1740-1779)

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Matthew Thornton House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **2 Thornton Street, at its intersection with North Main Street (by Pass Route 28)**

CITY OR TOWN:
Derry Village

STATE: **New Hampshire** CODE: COUNTY: **Rockingham** CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
				No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Wilson (603-434-4772)

STREET AND NUMBER:
2 Thornton Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Derry Village** STATE: **New Hampshire** CODE: **03038**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Exeter** STATE: **New Hampshire** CODE:

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2.5-acres**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Matthew Thornton House is a two-story square-shaped frame house with two-interior chimneys set behind the ridge. Of the salt-box type, the gable roof slopes steeply to the rear to include a one-story lean-to on the north (rear) elevation. The main house is almost 36½-feet square, and is five-bays wide and two-bays deep. The exterior of the building was probably remodelled in the Greek Revival style during the first portion of the 19th-century. The front corners are marked by giant pilasters and a one-bay wide one-story portico shelters the center door of the front (south) facade. The walls are covered with clapboards; the windows have exterior louvered shutters, and first-story windows are topped by cornices. An engraving of the Thornton House which appeared on page 65 of William Brotherhead's Book of the Signers (1861) indicates that the front (south) elevation of the house has been little altered since 1861.

A one-story frame service ell, about 16 by 44½-feet in size, extends at right angles from the northwest (rear) corner of the main house, thus giving the structure its present L-shape. This rear service wing contains the kitchen and work rooms for the servants.

The main house has a central hall plan which divides the four rooms on the first floor into pairs. The center hall, divided into front and rear sections, extends through the house. Each portion has its own stairway and the stair is set against the right (east) wall of the hall. To the right of the hall are the living room and behind this, the "laundry room" (modern use). To the left of the hall are the dining room and in the rear the "family room" (modern use). The two chimneys between these rooms were rebuilt on a smaller scale in the early 19th-century for use with Franklin stoves. The fireplaces and mantels are therefore gone in the east rooms; there is still a 19th-century mantel in place on the dining room fireplace, and the fireplace in the family room is completely modern. The original wide board floors remain in place throughout the house, except in the family room, where they have been built over. There are three bedrooms and two bathes on the second floor. Traces of wall paper dating from 1811 have been found on the walls of one of these chambers. The house is in fair condition and has never been restored. Used as a private residence, the Matthew Thornton House is not open to visitors. The owner, who recently acquired the property, hopes to restore the building.

A bronze plaque set in a boulder located in front of the house reads: "The homestead of Hon. Matthew Thornton, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Born in Ireland, 1714. A physician in this town, 1740-1778. Died 1803. To his memory, the Molly Reid Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution dedicate this stone, 1909."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1740-1779**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> | Education <input type="checkbox"/> | Political <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> | Invention <input type="checkbox"/> | Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Art <input type="checkbox"/> | Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> | Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> | Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/> | Literature <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> | Military <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | Music <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The home of Matthew Thornton, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence for New Hampshire, physician, politician, and jurist from around 1740 to 1779. The frame and floors of the house are 18th-century but the exterior clapboarding and chimneys are replacements of the originals. In spite of undergoing considerable alteration over the years, this is the finest of the extant houses that have been associated with Thornton.

Brief Sketch of the Life of Matthew Thornton, c. 1714-1803

Matthew Thornton was born in Ireland of Scotch-Irish parents, probably in 1714. Coming to America about 1718, his family settled first in Wiscasset, Maine, and then near Worcester, Massachusetts, where the boy received his education. Studying medicine under a Dr. Grout, Thornton was admitted to the profession in 1740 and began to practice in Londonderry, New Hampshire, where he was to reside until 1780. In 1745 Thornton took part in the Louisbourg Expedition to Nova Scotia as an under-surgeon. About 1760 he married Hannah Jack, by whom he had five children.

In 1758 he was elected as representative from Londonderry to the provincial assembly and he held this office until 1775. In the latter year he was elected president of the provincial assembly. He helped prepare a constitution for New Hampshire and in January 1776 was elected speaker of the house of representatives of the new state legislature. In 1776 he was also elected to the Continental Congress, and although he did not take his place until November 19, he was allowed to sign the Declaration of Independence. He served in Congress for about one year and then returned to resume service in state affairs. In 1776 he had been chosen an associate justice of the superior court and he held this office until 1782.

In 1780 Thornton moved from Londonderry and established his home in Merrimack County, New Hampshire. He had given up his medical practice but continued to be active in political affairs for some years, serving in the newly organized state senate from 1784 to 1786. His last years were spent on his Merrimack farm. He died on June 24, 1803 in Newburyport, Massachusetts, while visiting his daughter, but his body was interred near his home in Merrimack. Thornton New Hampshire, was named in his honor.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Elizabeth Fields and Dr. J.E. Fields, "The Signers Lived Here," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, May 1951, 3.

Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XVIII, 503-504. Article by William A. Robinson.

New Hampshire, A Guide to the Granite State (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1938), 446.

David C. Whitney, Founders of Freedom in America (Chicago, 1964), 217-18.

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 ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW.	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "		42	53	38
SW	° ' "	° ' "			71	18 46

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE: 6/21/71

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 - 19th Street N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: _____

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS