

PH0004583

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.8.18.0036	DATE 8/25

**1. NAME**

COMMON NAME: (Old Custom House) And Post Office

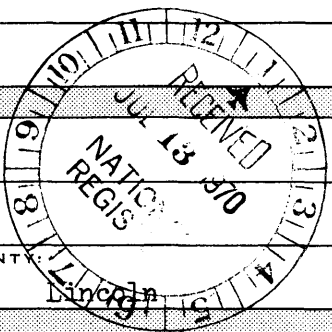
AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Water Street (no number)

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wiscasset 04578

STATE: Maine CODE: 18 COUNTY: Lincoln



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Charlotte Hodgman

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Water Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wiscasset

STATE:  
Maine

CODE:  
18

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Lincoln County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wiscasset

STATE:  
Maine

CODE:  
18

**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

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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 slightly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building is located on a plot of ground bounded on the north by McCollough Street, east by Water Street, south by Fore Street, and west by Middle Street, the entrances being on the south and west sides. The lot has a frontage of 142' on Front Street, 118' on Water Street and the same on Middle Street.

The building's construction commenced in the fall of 1868. A Mr. Mullet was the supervising architect for the Treasury Department and Mr. William Hogan of Bath, Maine was the contractor. It is erected upon a foundation of granite laid in cement. It presents a neat appearance; being built of brick, two stories in height, with a slated hip roof. The trimmings, which are few and simple, are of Hallowell granite, and consist mainly of a heavy cornice around the top, a finish around the doors, and a key stone and sill to each window. There is a full cellar which is supported by granite walls. Brick columns and arches support the first floor. This building is a rectangle approximately 38' x 40'. The cubic contents of the building are 94,000 feet. It was built with hot air furnaces. The roof over the main doorway on Front Street has an ornamental gable, containing a semi-circular window. The chimneys are of a plain pattern.

The entrance which faces Middle Street entered into a vestibule 36' x 10' from the west side and the entrance from Fore Street on the north gave entrance into this vestibule which also contains the stairway to the second story. The floor was, and remains today, composed of alternate squares of the best Italian and black marble. Beyond the vestibule is a hall in which doors to the cellar stairs, a restroom and supply closet were provided. The hall led to the Post Office proper, a large room 36' x 26'. Two doors led out of the Post Office room to Water Street.

The second story contains four rooms. The first, a 12' x 14' room was the Post Master's office. The second, a 13' x 15' room was the Office of the Collector of Internal Revenue. The third room, across the upstairs hall 15' x 15' was the Custom Collector's Office. The fourth, a 37' x 20' room was the Custom House Clearing Office.

The interior work was done under the supervision of Stephen S. Haynes of Orono, Maine, who was a superior workman and thorough mechanic as his work bears evidence. A coat of mortar an inch in thickness was laid between the floors in both stories for protection against fire. The walls all had a hard finish of plaster of paris, which remains intact today, and all rooms and the vestibule have a neat cornice.

A flag staff 87' high was raised on The Custom House November 24, 1869. This staff passed through the slate roof. It was anchored in the structural timbers' beams above the second floor.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

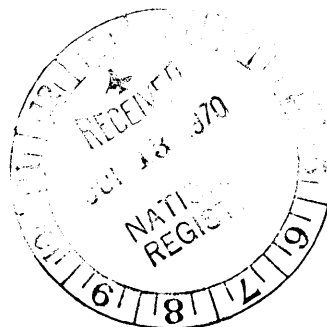
STATE	Maine
COUNTY	Lincoln
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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70-8-18-0036	8/25

(Number all entries)

Present Appearance

This building today is structurally the same as when built. On the exterior there has been added a portico over the Middle Street main entrance. This rises above two classic columns and adds to the overall effect of the building. The interior is again structurally the original. The Post Office room proper is today the sales area for a Creative Plaything toys and quality crafts store. Previous to this the building was used as an Art Gallery. The remaining rooms are being used for living space. The only changes in the interior is a replacement panel plywood ceiling over the second floor's former Customs Clearing House room, which is now a living and dining room area. The original plaster ceiling had been damaged by a water leak in the slate roof's drains. This leak has been repaired. The old flag staff has been removed and the aperture is being enlarged at this time to provide a skylight for an art studio in the loft area.

The building is in good condition. The grounds are neat, surrounded by a low cast iron fence.



**SIGNIFICANCE**

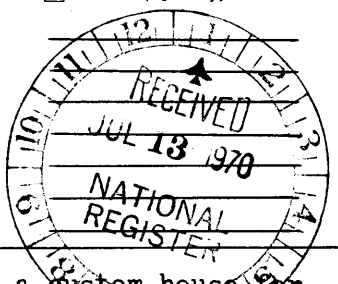
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<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) Opened 1870 as Post Office and Custom House

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate) Closed 1956

<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 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 type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wiscasset Point has, since 1791, been the seat of a custom house for the river and contiguous portions of the sea. It was established as a port of entry by the legislature, June 3, 1789, and it was discontinued June 30, 1913, the records being removed in the spring of 1932 to the custom house at Bath.

Before the passage under the federal constitution, in 1789, of the first acts of Congress for federal collection of revenues from imports and from excise, the state of Massachusetts received and levied its own duties of those sorts, and appointed the officers who collected. Naval offices were opened for the entrance and clearance of vessels, records being kept by a naval officer appointed for that purpose.

President Washington, on August 3, 1789, nominated Francis Cook to the Senate for the office of collector of customs at Wiscasset and the Senate confirmed Cook. In 1791 Cook was given an additional appointment under the Act for the collecting of internal revenue. He had been chosen by the General Court for Wiscasset, June 27, 1787, 1788, and 1789. The commission of his permanent appointment (March 21, 1791) names Francis Cook "Inspector of the Revenue for the several ports within the District of Wiscasset in Massachusetts." Cook held this office for thirty-eight years.

When his house was built on Main Street, in 1795, Cook kept the custom-house office in a little building on his land, just west of his house. This first custom house was afterward hauled to the Harrington lot on Bradford Street and occupied by Thyrza Segars. It was finally burned.

On March 13, 1790, David Silvester was appointed by the legislature collector of excise for the western district of Lincoln County.

Several years later a custom house designed by Alexander Johnson, Jr., was erected near the shore at the Point, close to Whaleship Wharf.

The Wiscasset custom house was one of the buildings burned in the devastating fire of October 8, 1866.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

A History of Public Buildings Under the Control of The Treasury Department 1900  
 Washington Government Printing Office 1901  
 Newspaper Article April 15, 1870, The Seaside Oracle, Wiscasset, Me.  
The New Custom House and Post Office  
 Newspaper Article, April 10, 1970, Maine Times. A New Life For An Old Building  
 Chase, Fannie S. Wiscasset In Pownalborough 1937

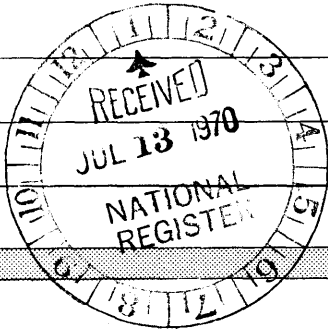
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	.	"	0	.	"	44 <sup>o</sup>	0	0
NE	0	.	"	0	.	"	69 <sup>o</sup>	40	0
SE	0	.	"	0	.	"			
SW	0	.	"	0	.	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

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: John W. Briggs, Historian

ORGANIZATION: State Park and Recreation Commission DATE: May 12, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: State House

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 18

**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 Lawrence Stuart  
 Title Director  
 Date 7/9/70

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

Ernest Allen Connolly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date AUG 25 1970

ATTEST:  
William J. Swartz  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date JUL 31 1970

19/446 6009/1871950  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maine	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.8.18.0036	8/85

(Number all entries)

In April, 1870, the "new" custom house, in which the post-office was also housed, was opened. It occupies a lot on the north side of Front Street, between Water and Middle Streets. The space which it covers was formerly divided into two lots, one of which belonged to Abiel Wood, and the other to Orchard Cook.

Mr. Mullet was the supervising architect for the Treasury Department. The building was commenced in the autumn of 1868, and William Hogan of Bath was the contractor. For some unknown reason, possibly frugality, Hogan proceeded to remove the bricks from the foundation of the old fort on Davis Island, intending to use them for the foundation of the custom house. It was not until a great number of the bricks from the water batteries had been taken away that the appeal of Colonel Amory to the War Department prevented further desecration. Then the stones which formed the boundary of the Wood burying ground in Mary Greenough's pasture on Sweet Auburn were commandeered for the custom house. It was this vandalism which caused Joseph Wood to move all of the Wood family who had been buried there to Woodlawn Cemetery at Birch Point.

The building was completed and occupied in 1870, the cost of construction being \$30,457.25.

The Custom House in Wiscasset celebrated its hundredth anniversary on April 15, 1970. It's no longer a custom house and post office. Today, the postal boxes have been replaced by Creative Playthings toys, and quality crafts. Upstairs, the owners have their living quarters with a view of the Sheepscot River all around. And the attic is being converted into an artist's studio.

The Custom House has not only been saved, it has been constructively utilized.

The purchase and conversion was done by Charlotte Hodgman. She purchased the building in 1965 for \$5400. She quickly added an oil furnace, a full bath, a kitchen and a little paint and she was ready to move in.

The building was put up for auction by the General Services Administration when a new post office was built on the main street of Wiscasset.

Before Mrs. Hodgman bought the building from the federal government, it went through several years of limited use. The customs office was closed in 1912, but draft boards and the IRS continued to fill the space over the post office until they all moved in the early sixties.

The Maine Art Gallery used the building for two summers. But usage was minimal, and the government had to sell.

