

PHO 354309

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 2 1976

DATE ENTERED NOV 21 1976

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

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Horatio G. Foss House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

19 Elm Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Auburn

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd, Hon. William Cohen

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Androscoggin

CODE

001

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
  - UNOCCUPIED
  - WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
  - YES: UNRESTRICTED
  - NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Woman's Literary Union of Androscoggin County

STREET & NUMBER

19 Elm Street

CITY, TOWN

Auburn

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds,

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Auburn

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                     | CHECK ONE   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input 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

Built in 1914, the Foss House is largely eclectic with apparent connections to the Colonial Revival, Georgian and Federal Styles. Designers Eugene J. Gibbs, and Addison Pulsifer combined dominant features of each of these styles into a highly sophisticated showcase for a prosperous family.

Complete with its original draperies, rugs, moldings, furnishings and period wall paper, the house today relies also for its elegance on its hardwood floors and several rooms of panelled walls and ceilings. Enhanced by its elaborate Palladian entryways framed between pilasters and surmounted by decorative entablatures, the floor plan of the house is Federal in design. Its great, high-ceilinged rooms are arranged to either side--the parlor to the left, kitchen, dining room, library, sunroom to the right-- of a large entry hall.

In the center of the house and toward the back of the hallway is an elegantly carved, double-curved staircase which forces the house to bow out at the center of the rear wall. This bowing theme of the Federal style is carried to the southern facade. Here, two tiers of symmetrically located windows are bowed--though set somewhat back into the wall -- one above the other on each side of the main door. The two ground level windows are Palladian in style. The main doorway is similar to the Palladian-Mid Georgian doorways of the 1770's which used square-headed doors framed by pilasters and sidelights with rectangular transoms above. In the Foss House this surround is capped by a small pediment. This, and the cornice of the entire building, has a box decoration. The door itself is set into a neoclassic, opened porch supported by double Roman Doric columns on either side. The porch, crowned by a large segmental pediment, is approached from the street by two sets of stairs and a walk.

A sun room extends off the building's east side and is counter balanced on the west by a porch with an attached porte-cochere. The porte-cochere has a panelled ceiling and is supported by and attached to the main house by columns. The roofs of the sun room and porte-cochere serve as balconies for the second floor library and bedrooms. The balustrade of these balconies is decorated with pineapple-shaped ornaments, some of which still remain on the building, and all of which still exist.

Separated, behind, and to the west of the porte-cochere, is the carriage house, complete with basement and an upstairs. The driveway extends in a loop from the street to the carriage house, partially through to the back of the main house and around to the porte-cochere.

Three chimneys project from the roof, as do dormers from each side of the massive hip roof. The dormers light the third story which has walls of tongue and grooved boards. This floor functioned as a ballroom/playroom area. The Georgian roof is protected with red clay tiles, indicative of the Spanish influence. Replacement tiles of all types are stored in the basement of the carriage house. The rest of the exterior is stuccoed with Palladian rustication through the use of quoins.

The full fascination of this building is enhanced by an imagination of the

(See continuation sheets)

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY    | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

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**SPECIFIC DATES**

1914

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT**

Eugene J. Gibbs &amp; Addison Pulsifer

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This impressive Colonial Revival mansion was built in 1914 by Horatio Gates Foss, a highly successful Lewiston industrialist and self-made man. The land on which it stands was purchased by Foss from Samuel Pickard who inherited it from his father-in-law, Squire Edward Little, the principal founder of Lewiston-Auburn. (See Edward Little House, N.R. 5/12/76).

The son of a shoemaker, Jeremiah Foss and his wife, Elizabeth N. (Handerson), Horatio Gates Foss was born in Wayne, Maine on February 22, 1846. While being educated in the local public schools, he learned the shoe-making trade from his father and later went to Haverill, Massachusetts to gain practical experience in larger shoe shops.

In 1875 he came to Auburn and became associated with the shoe manufacturing firm of Dingley, Strout & Co. Mr. Strout died in 1887, at which time the name was changed to Dingley, Foss & Co., since Foss had already established himself as a partner and became General Manager of this firm which employed between five and six hundred people. During his later years he spent considerable time in Boston where he could be near the stock market in which he was very active. He died December 2, 1928.

The couple having had no children, his widow, Ella M. (Fletcher) whom he married in 1878, upon her death in 1941, bequeathed the house to the Woman's Literary Union.

The Foss House, long an Auburn showplace, stands as yet another reminder of the rewards of success in the 19th century industrial world.



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

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many uses which the building had as a private home and what it meant to those who lived there. Surely, in a metaphorical sense, its many and varied architectural styles are symbolic of these feelings.