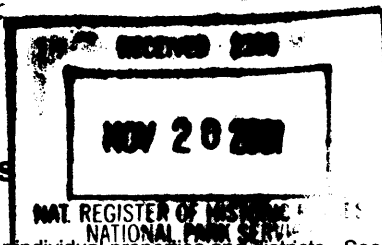


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1420

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cummings Shoe Factory

other names/site number South Berwick Shoe Company

2. Location

street & number 2 Railroad Ave N/A not for publication

city or town South Berwick N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 03908

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11/9/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 12/31/01  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson W. Beall

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction: manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, walls Brick, roof Membrane, other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or a grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1871-1951

Significant Dates

1871, 1880s, 1910, 1932

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Old Berwick Historical Society, South Berwick, Maine

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY  
Name of Property

YORK COUNTY, MAINE  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.97 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

1	9													
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4 

1	9													
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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Christi A. Mitchell, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 18 October 2001

street & number 55 Capitol St., State House Station 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town Augusta state ME zip code 04333-0065

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

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### DESCRIPTION

The Cummings Shoe factory is an imposing five story, multi-winged, flat-roofed brick factory located one block from the center of South Berwick, Maine. Originally surrounded by ancillary structures and worker housing, the bulk of the Italianate structure was constructed between 1871 and 1891. Currently a non-contributing building housing the Community Center and Fire Station is located on the property.

The 1871 factory was "L" shaped with the approximately equal length legs running southwest and southeast. (For ease of description the southwest elevation will be referred to as the south elevation.) Each story contains six-over-six windows capped by segmental arched lintels, and a simple corbel table caps the structure. The lintels vary slightly in size and style from floor to floor. The segmental arch on the third floor continues between the windows, and this scalloped ribbon-like feature provided a touch of ornamentation on each elevation. Above the fourth floor windows is a slightly raised, copper-flashed one foot wide string course runs continuously around the building, which serves to visually diminish the top story and ground the building on its site. A one story watchman/clock tower rises over the junction of the two original legs.

The first addition, added circa 1880, consisted of another flat roofed five story brick structure running north-south, attached to the western end of the original mass, creating a U-shape. This addition was very similar to the first in ornamentation, however the raised belt course between the fourth and fifth floors was eliminated, and the north and south ends feature a very low pitched gable roof with more pronounced corbeled brick cornices. Either contemporaneously, or shortly thereafter, a matching third leg was attached to and extended from the center of the west side of the previous addition.

The following description of the structure was given by Jerry Blackmore, a long-time Cummings employee, neighbor to the building and associate of William I. Cummings.

As there was no electricity in town, kerosene lamps were used throughout the factory. There was one fire tub on the premises and three hand tubs in town. There was no municipal water supply. Water for the factory and 40 factory tenements was pumped from a spring of Railroad Ave. to a wooden tank (3600 gal.) in the belfry of the factory...Heat and power for the factory was supplied by a boiler that used coal and waste chips. In later years a sprinkler system was installed throughout the factory. A water tower installed in the factory yard was filled with water pumped from a spring fed pond adjacent to the factory. Capacity of the pond estimated at 200,000 gallons...Four hydrants were installed in the factory yard. Fire drills were executed monthly....The factory was operated by belts from overhead steam powered shafts. An elevator was installed in each wing. After the west wing was built, they manufactured their own paper boxes and processed raw hides on the 5th floor (note vents along roof edge).

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Continuation Sheet**

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

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After the factory was sold and renamed South Berwick Shoe, Co. in 1932, the new owners "built two small additions and all machinery was changed to electric power. They sold the two steam engines, tore down the carpenter shop, garage, and removed the public scales and sold all the tenement houses." (Blackmore, p. 18, 19).

Further changes by the Duchess Shoe Company between the 1960's and 1980's included building a concrete block, flat-roofed, two story addition between the western and north western wings, tearing down the stable and the water tower. The factory shut down in 1993. It recently underwent a certified rehabilitation which included replacing sash, repairing window and door frames, landscaping, repointing masonry, and removing the furnace stack and boiler room. The mill now contains forty-eight residential apartments.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cummings Shoe Factory in South Berwick Maine was a successful member of Maine's shoe industry for almost 120 years. Constructed largely between 1871 and 1891 the five story brick structure was surrounded for most of its life by support shops, including a tannery and stables, as well as tenement housing for workers, and it was a key employer and economic contributor to the Town of South Berwick. Although stripped of these ancillary structures by its closing in the early 1990's the factory building remains, and it currently contains 48 residential apartments. The structure is eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with Maine's shoe industry, once a cornerstone of the State's economy.

### ***History of the Shoe Industry in Maine***

The following is excerpted from 'The Maine Story', a study of major shoe-producing states in *Leather and Shoes*, 1955.

It was in the little town of Auburn, some 35 miles north of Portland on the Androscoggin River...that Maine's present-day shoe industry had its beginnings and grew into a thriving business. [Later, the] opening of the railroad from Portland to Montreal in 1842 with a spur track running into Lewiston encouraged other shoe plants to locate there. By early 1860 there were four large and 20 small firms operating in the area. All were fairly primitive operations in which shoes were cut at the plant, then "farmed out" for bottoming and stitching, returned for finishing, packing and shipping. All operations were performed by hand. It wasn't until 1860 when Ara Cushman, always a progressive manufacturer, set up a few sewing machines in a row, enabling his employes to work as a team, that Maine was en route to the modern concept of a shoe factory.

So quickly did Maine's shoe industry grow after it adopted the factory system that by 1879 shoe manufacturers in the state were turning out 5,676,000 pairs of shoes per year.

The following is excerpted from a study of the Shoe Industry in Maine, conducted by Roger Reed, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1991.

Many towns in Maine erected factory buildings through public subscription which were leased to out-of-state or out-of-town firms. An important early example of this was Skowhegan, whose citizens formed a

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# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

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syndicate to build a large brick factory in 1882 that was leased to Keene Brothers of Lynn, Massachusetts. As soon as the money was raised the shoe company brought in an architect and a landscape engineer for the factory and representative of the Maine Central Railroad to ensure the construction of a spur line. Similar arrangements led to the construction of factories in Ellsworth, Norway, and Springvale. In Freeport local benefactor E. B. Mallet built factories in 1886 and 1892 which were leased to Portland shoe companies.

While most out-of-state firms leased factory space, an important exception to this was David Cummings Company which built a large brick factory in South Berwick in 1871. This Massachusetts firm was one of several to locate in northern New England in response to the growth of the Knights and the Daughters of St. Crispin labor unions, which reached their peak of power among shoemakers in 1870-71. Important examples of locally owned firms constructing factories include G. H. Bass in Wilton and in Portland, A. H. Berry & Company, and the Portland Shoe Manufacturing Company. All of these firms tended to remain in operation longer than non-Maine companies.

The design of shoe factories outside of Auburn followed the pattern established in that city. Whether brick or wood, three or four stories and a basement with a low-pitched or flat roof was typical. Often an exterior stair tower was also present, such as the one built in Freeport in 1886. Equally as many, however, followed the characteristic Auburn design with no tower such as the Springvale shoe factory of 1913. The long demolished Warren factory of circa 1871, with its mansard roof and tower, was unusually elaborate, as was the Skowhegan factory of 1882. The latter was one of the most substantial ever built in Maine outside of Auburn. Except for Portland, where wood construction would not have been allowed, brick construction was a rarity and reinforced concrete was never employed in Maine's shoe industry prior to 1940.

The majority of shoe factories built in Maine have not survived. Towns which have lost large factories include Augusta, Bangor, Berwick, Calais, Ellsworth, Freeport, Gardiner, Hallowell, Kennebunk, Lewiston, Norway, Springvale, Warren, and Yarmouth....



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

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Although reduced to 50 shoe factories statewide in 1948 the industry rebounded to 80 active factories by 1955. In that year there were 21,000 people employed in Maine's shoe industry, approximately 18 percent of the total number of wage earners in the state. (Leather and Shoes, p. 12.)

## The Cummings Shoe Factory in South Berwick

In 1871 a Worcester, Massachusetts shoe manufacturer erected one of the largest brick shoe factories ever built in Maine in South Berwick. The Cummings Factory, which was enlarged twice in the 1880s, also included a box factory, stables for transporting goods, and extensive worker housing. The Cummings Company is also important for its age, paralleling Auburn's first period of factory construction. Cummings built his first shoe factory in Lynn, then established a two-story wooden plant in Springvale around 1864. Having no children himself, David Cummings hired his nephews Porter and William to manage the South Berwick operation while he resided in Sommerville, Massachusetts. His decision to build in South Berwick was clearly in response to the increasing strength of labor unions in his home state.

The factory Cummings erected in 1871 was an L-shaped brick structure, four stories and a basement, with a flat roof. Unlike other shoe factories in Maine, the Cummings Factory attempted a horizontal integration which may have contributed to its success. A brick addition was devoted to tanning operations, while a wooden building nearby was used to assemble boxes for the shoes. The large stables on the site enabled the company to maintain horses and wagons for transportation to the nearby railroad line.

With two nephews to supervise operations, it was very much a family-run company. Clearly there was an attempt to create a small self-supporting factory town within South Berwick. At the same time, however, there is no evidence that factory stores or other company monopolies competed with local merchants. (Reed, p. 8-11.)

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CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

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At the turn of the century the 350 employees of the South Berwick plant were capable of manufacturing up to 5,000 pairs of shoes a day, in what David Cummings hoped to be "the most complete factory in the country....with every up to date and improved equipment for making shoes." (Blackmore, p. 18). David Cummings died in 1910, and his obituary summed up his success in Maine: "The greatest financial interest of Mr. Cummings is in South Berwick, ME, where in 1870, he erected one of the largest factories in the State, and the town has grown in numbers and prosperity since the establishment of this industry..." (Boston Transcript, April 2, 1910). The business was passed onto his nephew William I. Cummings under whom it continued to thrive for two decades.

"In 1929, the depression came along with bank closures. The factory was forced to close. (Cummings) retained all the factory foremen, yard men, carpenters, firemen, and watchmen. The foremen kept the factory clean. Every Saturday at 10 am the steam engine was brought up to pressure and all the machinery was turned on for 20 minutes to keep them in running condition....In 1932, Mr. Paisner and Mr. Batchelder shoe manufacturers from Lynn, Mass. were having labor problems at their factory. They came to South Berwick and leased David Cummings Company. (They later purchased it.) They named the new company South Berwick Shoe, Inc. They operated a very prosperous business for a number of years. They built two small additions and all machinery was changed to electric power. They sold the two steam engines, tore down the carpenter shop, garage, and removed the public scales and sold all the tenement houses. After South Berwick Shoe ceased operation [somewhere between 1956 and 1975] the factory was idle until Duchess Shoe company purchased it. They ran a successful business until imports of foreign shes (sic) flooded the market and made it impossible to compete...In 1993 the bank foreclosed on Duchess Co., and the factory was put up for auction." (Blackmore, p. 19)

The building was subsequently purchased by the Town of South Berwick in 1995, and has recently undergone a certified rehabilitation.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY

YORK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Reed, Roger. "Survey and Inventory of Factories and Housing Associated with Maine's Shoe Industry". Unpublished report and research files on file at Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine, 1991.

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# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

**CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY**

**YORK COUNTY, MAINE**

**Section number 10 Page 2**

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property is designated on the Town of South Berwick property tax map #31, lot 132A.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated property includes all that property historically associated with the David Cummings Shoe Factory.

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# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

**CUMMINGS SHOE FACTORY**

**YORK COUNTY,**

**MAINE**

**Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_**

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

1 of 4

Amy Cole Ives

30 May 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

South elevation looking north.

2 of 4

Amy Cole Ives

30 May 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

West elevation looking east.

3 of 4

Amy Cole Ives

30 May 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

South center entrance, looking north.

4 of 4

Amy Cole Ives

30 May 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Interior corridor, third floor, west wing, looking east.