

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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 any 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 Wheelock Common Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Vermont Route 122 & Wheelock Town Highway #17 not for publication N/A
city or town Wheelock vicinity N/A
state Vermont code VT county Caledonia code 005 zip code 05851

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Daniels National Register Specialist 7-18-07
Signature of certifying official Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

Wheelock Common Historic District
Name of property

Wheelock, Caledonia Co., Vermont
Town, County and State

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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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):

for

Signature of Keeper

8.30.07

Date of Action

=====

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

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Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u>	Sub: <u>City Hall</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>Park</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
<u>Recreation & Culture</u>	<u>Monument/marker</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Government</u>	Sub: <u>City Hall</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>Park</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
<u>Recreation & Culture</u>	<u>Monument/marker</u>

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof steel

asphalt

walls weatherboard

other _____

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C 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.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Entertainment/Recreation

Performing Arts

Period of Significance 1827 - 1956

Significant Dates 1827

1860

1871

1940

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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.) See continuation sheets.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 2

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	0731480	4941130	3	18	0731594 4940937
2	18	0731425	4941027	4	18	0731650 4941039
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.)

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Wheelock Common Historic District
Name of property

Wheelock, Caledonia Co., Vermont
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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Tracy Nichae Martin

organization _____ date September, 2006

street & number 27 School Street telephone 802-472-3139

city or town East Hardwick state VT zip code 05836

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Wheelock

street & number VT Rte. 122 & Wheelock Town Highway #17 telephone 802-626-9094

city or town Wheelock state VT zip code 05851

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

Wheelock Common Historic District
Name of property

Wheelock, Caledonia County, Vermont
Town, County and State

=====

Narrative Description

Wheelock is a small, rural town with a population of 621 located in northern Caledonia County. The Town is bordered by Sutton and Lyndon to the east, Danville to the south, Stannard to the west and Sheffield to the north. The Village of Wheelock (known historically as Wheelock Hollow) is situated in the northeast corner of the town. The village straddles Vermont Route 122 and is bounded to the northeast by Interstate 91 and to the southwest by the meandering river of Miller's Run.

The Wheelock Common District is located at the south end of the village. The 2 acre district includes land that once represented both the religious and civic heart of the community. There are four contributing resources in the district and one that is non-contributing. The focal point of the Common District is the Wheelock Town Hall (#1) located on the northeast side of Route 122 just south of the junction with Town Highway #17. Buffering the Town Hall from Route 122 is a small common (#2) with a noncontributing bandstand and a contributing memorial to veterans of the Civil War (#2A). Across Route 122 from the Town Hall and the common on a small bluff above the river is the Wheelock Village cemetery (#3). The district retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association.

1. Wheelock Town Hall, 1871, contributing

Built in 1871, the Wheelock Town Hall is a 1½ story, three by four bay clapboarded Greek Revival building with a two-stage Italianate belfry. The building has a transitional balloon frame with oversized plates reflecting the long tradition of timber framing in this rural northeast corner of the state. The Town Hall is front-gabled with paneled pilasters, a full entablature, molded cornices, gable returns and original door and window surrounds. In 1972, the Hall was moved off its foundation and slightly southward to the site previously occupied by the Wheelock Hollow Church. The two buildings had stood side by side for more than 80 years until the church was demolished in 1961. At the time of the move, the Town Hall was set up on a high concrete foundation to create a full basement. The Town Hall is in good condition and, in spite of the slight shift in its location, it stands very close to its original position facing the common across the road from the village cemetery.

The Wheelock Town Hall is a late Greek Revival structure that illustrates the lasting appeal of the style for use in institutional and governmental buildings. Its two-stage Italianate belfry includes arched, keystone window openings (now shuttered) and paired roof brackets. The addition of the belfry may have been an effort to bring the otherwise old-fashioned design up-to-date. The building has a modern standing seam metal roof.

A front-gabled structure, the Town Hall's front or southwest façade features a full entablature and thin cornice returns visually supported by paneled corner pilasters. The main entry, originally closer to grade is now accessed by a small uncovered concrete entry porch with an iron railing. The door surround has paneled pilasters and a full entablature with "Town Hall" spelled out in large green letters on the frieze. The original massive four-paneled wood door has been replaced with a pair of shorter steel doors, and a single-pane transom has been added to fill the space above the modern doors. The front door is flanked by two tall double-hung windows with three-over-three sash. The window lintels have a simple molded cornice. A shorter window above the front door is protected by closed louvered shutters. (A historic image of the building shows that similar shutters were once in place on all the windows.) A small louvered vent is located between the top of this window and the gable peak.

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The southeast façade has four bays and a full entablature with a simple cornice, again visually supported by paneled corner pilasters. At the foundation level, two small modern insulated windows occupy the front (easternmost) two bays. A wood ramp with a shed roof runs the length of three bays from the rear of the building to a modern steel door, providing an accessible entrance to the main floor and meeting hall. This entrance is lit by a large rectangular transom over the door. The ramp roof is sheathed with standing seam metal roofing that matches the roofing on the main block of the building. The other three bays have double hung windows with original three-over-three sash. The window and door surrounds all have lintels with the same simple molded cornice seen on the front façade. It may be that a window was removed at some point to create the entrance on the south façade.

The rear, northeast, façade has no doors or windows, but features paneled pilasters visually supporting cornice returns. A narrow cement block chimney has been built against the center of this façade.

The entablature and pilasters on the northwest façade mirror those on the south. At the foundation level, two small modern insulated windows occupy the front two bays, also matching those on the south facade. The entrance to the town office is at grade level between the third and fourth bays (front to rear) and is comprised of a modern steel door protected by a small gabled roof supported by wood struts and sheathed with asphalt shingles. On the main floor are four tall double-hung 3 over 3 windows, all retaining their original surrounds.

The full basement of the Wheelock Town Hall was added in 1971 to provide space for the Town Clerk's office and for other facilities deemed necessary for the hall's continued use as a center for Wheelock's town government and for community activities. The basement level can be accessed by a door on the northwest façade located toward the rear of the building. A stairway leads down from this door to an open meeting area. (Another stairway leads up to the hall's main floor.) The basement meeting room occupies a large area in the west corner of the basement (approximately ½ of the total floor space). The Town Clerk's office, a long narrow room, is oriented along the southwest wall of the building. Several small rooms at the rear of basement include, from south to north: the vault (accessible only from the Town Clerk's Office), a kitchen, a furnace room and two bathrooms.

The main floor of the Town Hall is comprised of a large open meeting room with a stage at the rear (northeast side). The walls are paneled from floor to ceiling with narrow beadboard applied horizontally. The narrow pine board flooring is finished with a clear varnish. The window trim and baseboards are unadorned. Historic lighting fixtures dating from the 1920s or 30s are extant. Four are suspended from the painted board ceiling above the hall and two hang above the stage.

The Wheelock Town Hall Stage features two decorative theater curtains painted in 1940 by artist Robert Naves. One curtain is a simple depiction of Willoughby Lake (located in Westmore, Vermont) the other, a backdrop, features advertisements for local businesses arranged in a street scene. Naves worked out of a studio in Hampton, New Hampshire but painted curtains for a number of communities in Vermont.

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2. Wheelock Village Common, c. 1880, contributing

In 1880, Thomas Jefferson Cree, a lawyer and community leader, donated a quarter acre parcel of land beside the Town Hall to receive the relocated and remodeled Wheelock Hollow Church. At the same time, "Judge" Cree donated a smaller parcel between the road and the Town Hall and church lots for use as a "Public Common or Park." Today the common is a semi-circle of lawn shaded by tall pines. To the north, it is bounded by a curved driveway servicing the Town Hall and to the south by Vermont Route 122.

Two benches have been placed on the north side of the common under the pine trees. A small non-contributing bandstand is located near the center of the common directly opposite the front doors of the Town Hall, close to the site where another bandstand stood in the first decades of the twentieth century. A few yards northwest of the bandstand is a contributing granite monument dedicated to Wheelock's Civil War veterans. At the northwest corner of the common, where the driveway joins Route 122, is a small World War I monument made from a mill stone mounted with a bronze plaque. Since its creation, the common has been a memorial park, a gathering place for the community and a site for social and cultural events.

2A. Civil War Monument, 1915, contributing

On Memorial Day, May 29, 1915, residents of Wheelock gathered on the common for the unveiling of a monument to memorialize local soldiers who served in the Civil War. The monument was a gift to the town from Ferdinand Chase, a successful businessman who had grown up in Wheelock and had served in the Sanitary Commission during the war. A local history enthusiast, Ferdinand Chase, had another 25 historic markers placed around the town in the following year.

Made of Barre granite, the four-sided block stands eight feet tall (including a two-stage granite base). A pair of crossed standards is carved on the face of the monument. Below these, is a bronze plaque inscribed "Lest We Forget. Erected 1915. In memory of those who enlisted from Wheelock in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1865." On either side of the block are plaques listing the men from Wheelock who served as privates during the war and on the back another lists noncommissioned officers under the state seal. The monument is now surrounded by a low fence made of metal piping.

2B. Bandstand, 1976, non-contributing

The bandstand on the common was built as a town project for the national bicentennial and was dedicated on September 19, 1976. It is a hexagonal wood frame structure with square posts and a solid wood rail on five sides. The northeast side (facing the Town House) is open with two concrete steps providing access to the raised plank floor. The bandstand has a painted plywood ceiling and is roofed with asphalt shingles. An earlier bandstand had graced the common from 1902 until it was severely damaged by the hurricane of 1938.

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Wheelock Common Historic District
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3. Wheelock Village Cemetery, 1827/1860, contributing

In 1860, Ward Bradley deeded to the Town of Wheelock a three-quarter acre parcel of land southwest of the main road through the Hollow for use as a cemetery. Located on a small bluff, a remnant of a glacial delta, the cemetery lies 35 feet above and 400 feet to northeast of the Miller's Run river. Like the Town Common, it is shaded by large pine trees that grow well in the sandy soil.

The legal transfer of the cemetery to the town seems to have come somewhat after the fact. In the deed, the description of the parcel reads "it being that portion that has been for some years occupied as a public burying ground." The first person to have been buried there was Ward Bradley's own mother, Hannah H. Bradley, who died in May of 1827 at the age of 76.

Interestingly, graves for two individuals who died before Hannah Bradley can also be found in the Wheelock Village Cemetery. One, Benjamin Carter, was a veteran of both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. He died in 1814 at the age of 50 and was interred in a small unofficial burying ground across the road, southeast of the current Village Cemetery. Carter's remains were moved to the new cemetery sometime after 1827. Sarah Woodman "first wife of Jonathan Woodman" died in Wheelock in 1808. As in the case of Benjamin Carter, Sarah's grave in the Village Cemetery most likely reflects the removal of her remains from an earlier burying place sometime after the Village Cemetery was established.

While the Village Cemetery is dominated by simple marble headstones of the mid to late nineteenth century, a half dozen green slate stones with the familiar weeping willow motif carved in low relief at the top, occur in a cluster on the far western side of the cemetery opposite the northern entrance. The slate stones range in date from 1827 to 1843. Larger monuments in the cemetery include thirteen obelisks, ten of marble and three of granite. Two large decorative granite plinths topped with carved urn forms are among the most elaborate monuments in the cemetery. A modest number of twentieth century granite monuments marking family plots appear throughout the cemetery.

The Wheelock Village Cemetery is now closed to additional burials. Today it is delineated by a painted board fence built along on its northeast boundary (Vermont Route 122). A modest wood sign on a post reads "Wheelock Village Cemetery" and two un-gated openings in the fence provide for pedestrian access.

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Wheelock Common Historic District
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The Wheelock Common Historic District is significant as the center of civic activity for the Town of Wheelock and the social and (at one time) religious center of activity for residents of the Village of Wheelock. Wheelock's annual Town Meeting has been convened at the Town Hall for over 130 years and both the Hall and the Common have served as sites for a variety of other community gatherings and social functions. The district is significant under Criterion A for its importance to the growth of local government and for its relationship to the development of the social and cultural life of the community. The Wheelock Town Hall is a good example of the Town Hall form from the second half of the nineteenth century and illustrates the endurance of the Greek Revival style for institutional and governmental buildings. Thus, the Wheelock Common Historic District is also significant under criterion C.

Wheelock is a small, rural town with a population of 621 located in northern Caledonia County. The Town is bordered by Sutton and Lyndon to the east, Danville to the south, Stannard to the southwest and Sheffield to the north. Measured by population alone, the Town of Wheelock peaked early, with over 960 residents appearing in the 1810 census. By 1890 this number had dropped to 596, and in 1960 Wheelock's lowest population was recorded at 244.

As the only town in the state of Vermont ever to have been chartered to an out-of-state organization, Wheelock was established under unique circumstances. In 1785 Vermont's General Assembly gave the charter for the town to Dartmouth College and the Moor's Indian Charity School, both located in Hanover, New Hampshire. The charter had initially been sought by the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock, founding president of both schools, and although he died before the charter was realized, the resulting town was named for him. The charter stated that rental income from Wheelock would go to support the two financially-strapped academic institutions. The relationship between the Town of Wheelock and the two schools, particularly Dartmouth College, was long-lasting, complicated and at times contentious. Not surprisingly, it suffered the same stresses common to many landlord-tenant relationships. Over time, many leasers purchased the land on which they lived and worked, but even as late as the 1970s some acreage in Wheelock was still generating income for Dartmouth College. By the middle of the next decade, however, the college had completely divested itself of its holdings in the town.

The Village of Wheelock, originally called Wheelock Hollow, is situated in the northeast corner of the town and was officially established by the Board of Selectmen in 1830 in response to a petition from Hollow residents. The village straddles Vermont Route 122, which was laid out in 1832 "from Sheffield line through Wheelock Hollow to Lyndon line." The road generally follows the meandering river of Miller's Run.

From the 19th through the mid 20th century farming was a common occupation among the residents of Wheelock, notwithstanding the steeply sloping pastures and the "high mowings" with which many had to contend. Wheelock farms followed many of the same trends seen throughout the state, moving from small diversified operations in the early nineteenth century toward larger more specialized farms as the century progressed and markets evolved. In 1840, during Vermont's "sheep craze," there were 4787 sheep in town. In that same year there were 1472 head of cattle and 1000 pigs. A dramatic drop in the number of Wheelock farms occurred over the course of several decades during the 20th century. In 1920, when most farms had become dairy operations, there were 90 working farms in town. Thirty years later that number had dropped to 76 and by 1960 the number was down to fifteen. In 1984, only six farms were still in operation in Wheelock.

Industry came early to Wheelock. The town's first sawmill is believed to have been built on the Williams River in South Wheelock. In Wheelock Hollow, the first mill was a gristmill, built on the Millers Run falls in 1792. A sawmill was built across the river on the same dam some time later. The long series of falls on the Millers Run, soon became the focal point for the development of other small industry and lead to relatively rapid growth in the Hollow.

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By the mid nineteenth century four dams had been built along the falls. Over the course of several decades, these dams provided power to tanneries, a woolen mill, a cabinet shop, a carding mill and a threshing machine factory. The height of industrial activity in the village extended from the 1830s through the 1860s, though several operations continued well beyond that. With the concentration of small industry along the Miller’s Run, it is not surprising that Wheelock Hollow attracted other businesses (a hotel, mercantile enterprises and craftsmen’s shops) and quickly became the town’s commercial center.

While settlement in the town of Wheelock had begun around 1780, the town was not organized until 1792. For the first town meeting residents convened at the home of Dudley Sweasey “ship carpenter.” In subsequent years, residents met to conduct the business of the town wherever adequate space could be found, including Col. John Bean’s dwelling and tavern. Beginning in 1801, Town Meeting was held in the new meeting house which had been built in South Wheelock on a portion of lot 56 that had been acquired by the town from Col. Bean. According to Thomas Jefferson Cree writing in Hemenway’s *Gazetteer*, the meeting house “like others of its kind, was never finished. . . . It was never lathed and plastered overhead; a hail storm broke some of the windows in the upper story, which invited the swallow and the wren to make their abode.” As with many early meeting houses in New England, the Wheelock meeting house served dual purposes providing space for activities relating to town government and for religious services.

In 1833, voters in the town of Wheelock opted to build a new structure “for town purposes.” This move to create a separate space for municipal use again mirrors the pattern of town hall development that occurred throughout New England. The Town House was built on the same site as the original Meeting House and even incorporated timbers from the earlier structure.

In addition to meeting houses and town houses, the people of Wheelock concerned themselves with constructing schools. In his entry in Hemenway’s *Gazetteer*, Thomas Jefferson Cree was critical in his assessment of the quality of these buildings. Cree, however, ended his discussion of schools on a hopeful note stating that “it is evident, from some late demonstrations that better times are coming for the youth, as to good, commodious school houses – as one has been built at the village, worthy of the name.” The school Cree was referring to was originally built on the northeast side of the main road through the village (Route 122) and was moved somewhat south in 1853 to a ridge overlooking the village road on the old Sutton Road (now Town Highway #17). The location of this school may later have influenced the location of the Wheelock Town Hall.

Southwest of Route 122, just south of the junction with the old Sutton Road is the Wheelock Village Cemetery. Officially deeded to the town in 1860, by long-time storekeeper and community leader Ward Bradley, the cemetery had actually been in use since 1827. Beginning as a family plot, the first person interred in the cemetery had been Ward Bradley’s own mother, Hannah H. Bradley who died in May of 1827 at the age of 76. Over the years, thirty other members of the Bradley family were buried there. Interestingly, two townspeople who died before Hannah Bradley also have markers in the cemetery; they are Sarah Woodman (deceased 12 March 1808) and Benjamin Carter (deceased 1 November 1814). Benjamin Carter was a veteran of both the American Revolution and the War of 1812. He was originally buried in a small unofficial burial ground across the road and just a short distance to the southeast of the cemetery. A small historic marker identifies the location of this earlier cemetery. The remains of Benjamin Carter and Sarah Woodman were apparently re-interred in the village cemetery after it was established.

It is unclear what inspired the people of Wheelock to replace their town house in South Wheelock with a town hall in Wheelock Village, but the move may have been connected with a period of commercial development in the Village which included the promotion of mineral springs, long-touted for their curative powers.

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The springs, located near the village, had been seen as a potential resource for some years prior. In 1860, a stage driver who sped into town to deliver the unhappy news that Wheelock had been passed over in favor of Lyndonville as the location for a new secondary school, was heard to sing

“Lyndon has the miserable thing,
Sutton has the measles,
Wheelock has the stinking spring,
Pop, goes the weasel.”

But in the 1860s and 70s an entrepreneur with Boston connections seemed on the verge of making the mineral springs into a booming tourist business and hopes for such a development must have been running high. The new Town Hall was built in 1871 on the main road just below the village school. Both the school and the town hall were simple but elegant public buildings built in the Greek Revival style. While the anticipated economic boom never materialized, a municipal center had been established for the town.

The first church in Wheelock Village was built along the main road by a congregation of Freewill Baptists sometime after 1828. In 1880 this church was moved south of its original site to a lot beside the Town Hall and was extensively remodeled. The land for the new site was donated by Thomas Cree who, at the same time, donated a parcel of land in front of the church and hall for use as a “Public Common or Park.” The Town Hall and church, both gable-fronted Greek Revival edifices with bellfries, would stand side by side for over 80 years. The grouping of schoolhouse, Town Hall and church set off by the green space of the common served as a center for civic, social and cultural activities well into the next century.

Over the years, the common in front of the Town Hall and church became the site for numerous community gatherings. A bandstand was built on the common in 1902, primarily for use by “Mosher’s Brass Band,” a town-based band made up of members of the Mosher family. (The current bandstand was built on the common in 1976 as part of the town’s national bicentennial festivities.) On Memorial Day 1915, a celebration was held on the common to unveil a monument to Wheelock’s Civil War Soldiers. The monument was donated to the town by Ferdinand Chase who had served with the Sanitary Commission during the conflict. Chase had grown up in Wheelock, but went on to be a successful businessman operating a hotel in Loon Lake, New York. Chase, who was an enthusiastic scholar of Wheelock history went on the erect 25 other monuments and historic markers around the town.

When the people of Wheelock sought to memorialize veterans of the First World War, the common was once again chosen as the most prominent location for such a memorial. The World War I monument at the northwest corner of the common, is comprised of a bronze plaque listing the names of Wheelock men who served in the conflict. A seal of the American Legion also appears on the plaque indicating that it may have been provided by the Legion.

In 1940, a painter by the name of Robert Naves came to Wheelock and painted two curtains for the Town Hall stage. The main curtain is a depiction of Willoughby Lake, a favorite spot for summer recreation in nearby Westmore, Vermont. The second curtain, made as a backdrop, is covered with advertisements for area businesses arranged in a somewhat abstracted streetscape. Naves worked for the Crystal Art Studio in Hampton, New Hampshire and in that capacity he painted theater curtains for a number of communities in Vermont. Naves was apparently marketing his curtains heavily in the area at the time as the Town Hall in Glover, Vermont, 13 miles north of Wheelock, also has curtains painted by Naves. Advertisements like those on the Wheelock backdrop were often sufficient to cover the cost of the work. Curtains like those in the Wheelock Town Hall have become the focus of a major statewide effort at documentation, assessment and preservation, and the Wheelock curtains have benefited from this effort, having recently received conservation treatment. In 2005, Wheelock’s painted curtains were included in a regional tour focusing on this art form

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The 1960s brought a number of changes to the Wheelock Common District. By this time, the Baptist Church beside the Town Hall had suffered many years of differed maintenance due to a dwindling congregation. Major work was needed on the building, but it was decided that insufficient resources were available to carry out the work and in 1961 the building was demolished. Eight years later in 1969, the school on the hill behind the Town Hall burned to the ground. Of the small cluster of institutional buildings that had for so many years served as the visual and civic heart of the village, the Town Hall was the sole survivor.

The 1969 school fire caused a serious problem for the community. At a special town meeting on June 20 of 1970 Wheelock voters elected to renovate the Town Hall "for the temporary use in the education of Wheelock school children in the elementary grades." This vote was reversed, however, at a second town meeting before any changes had been made to the building.

In 1972, the need for a town clerk's office, once again had townspeople looking at the Town Hall for a solution. The clerk's office had previously been located in the home of whoever happened to hold the office at the time. This arrangement raised a number of problems, chief among them concerns regarding the long-term preservation of town records. In May of 1972, townspeople voted to appropriate \$10,000 for the construction of a new clerk's office, but in September of that year a new vote was taken and the same funds were appropriated to "remodel and consolidate the town hall and the town clerk's office." This was accomplished by moving the Town Hall slightly southeast onto a raised concrete foundation built on the site previously occupied by the church. The resulting full basement could accommodate a town clerk's office, vault, kitchen, bathrooms and meeting space.

Although relocation of a historic building generally has a negative impact on the integrity of the structure, the move in this case was very minimal; the Town Hall remains oriented in the same way and still faces the common and the Village Cemetery across the road. It is interesting to consider that the historic grouping of the three institutional buildings near the common had originally been achieved by the relocation of both the school and the church. Additionally, the full basement has enabled the people of Wheelock to continue to use the Town Hall for its original purpose, conducting town business. The Selectmen's meetings are held in the basement meeting room once a month and, after 135 years, Wheelock's annual Town Meeting continues to be held in the meeting hall on the main floor of the building.

The Wheelock Town Hall also serves many social and community functions. Over the years the building has been the site of band practices, shape note singing conventions, bingo games, Community Christmas Parties and programs relating to the painted theater curtains. Community organizations that have met or sponsored activities at the Town Hall include Modern Woodmen, Community Club, 4-H Club, Fire Department, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the Bicentennial Committee. Clearly the Town Hall is not only a good example of its type, but is also a valued and well-used historic resource in the community of Wheelock.

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Wheelock Common Historic District
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Wheelock Common Historic District begins at a point at the intersection of VT Route 122 and Town Highway 17 and follows the northern edge of the roadway southeasterly along the edge of the village common to a point opposite the western end of the village cemetery. It crosses VT Route 122 and proceeds southerly and easterly along the back lot line of the cemetery to a point where that line again meets VT Route 122. The boundary then proceeds northerly and westerly along the crest of the hill behind the Town Hall until meeting Town Highway 17. It then proceeds south along the edge of Town Highway 17 to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

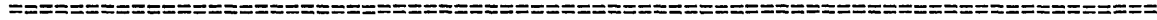
The Wheelock Common District includes property historically associated with the Town Hall as well as the .25 acre parcel donated by Thomas Jefferson Cree in 1880 for the Wheelock Hollow Church and the smaller parcel Cree donated at the same time for use as a town common. The district also includes the .75 acre parcel deeded to the town in 1860 by Ward Bradley for use as a cemetery.

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Wheelock Common District
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Photograph Labels

The following information is the same for all photographs except as noted:

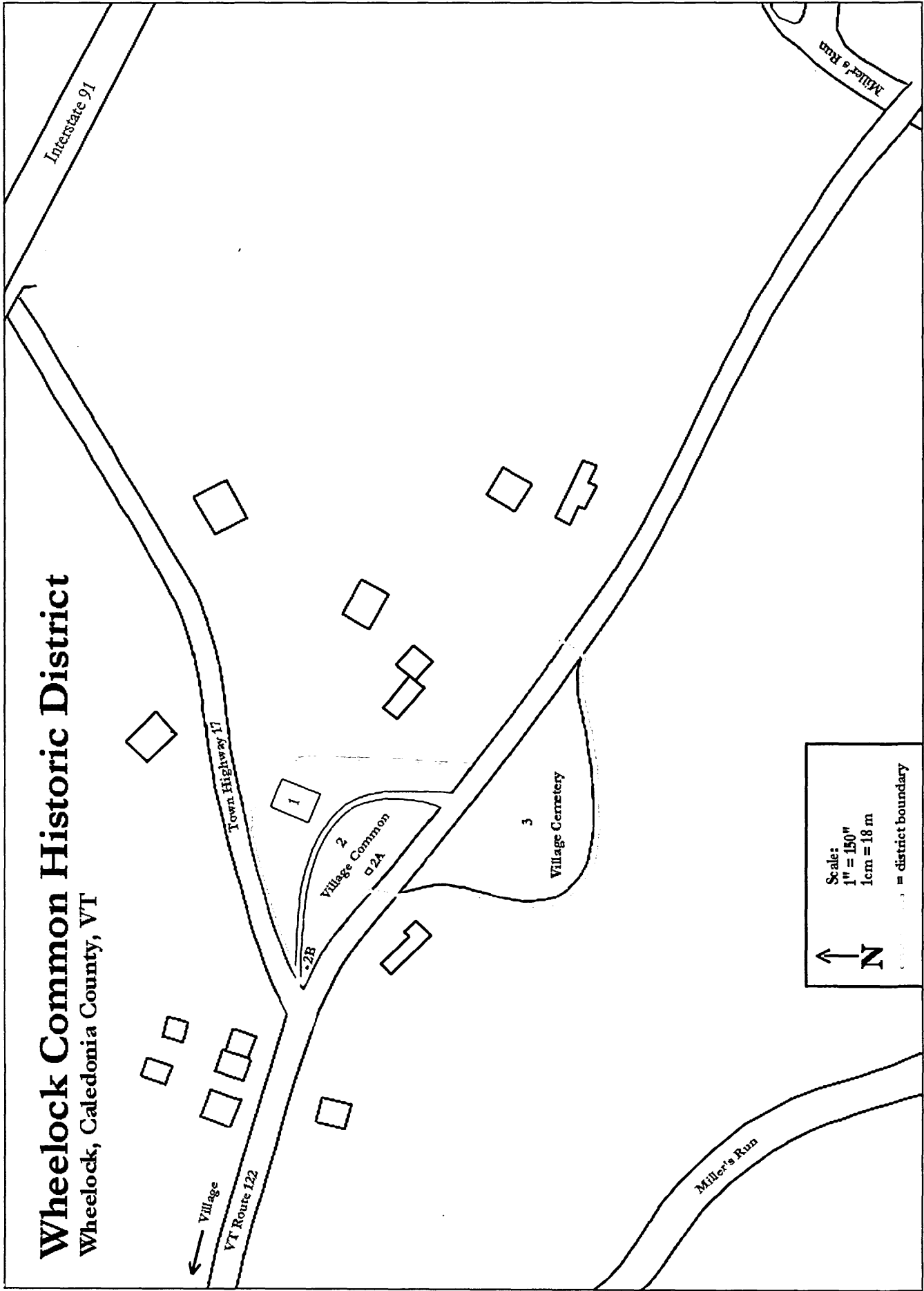
Name of Property: Wheelock Common Historic District
Location: Wheelock, Caledonia County, Vermont
Credit: Tracy N. Martin
Date: September 2006

Digital images on CD-ROM are filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>View</u>
1	View of district looking across common to Route 122 and cemetery	South
2	View from cemetery across Route 122 to common and Town Hall	North
3	Town Hall and Civil War monument	Northeast
4	Town Hall, southwest (front) façade	Northeast
5	Town Hall, southeast façade	Northwest
6	Town Hall, northeast façade	Southwest
7	Town Hall, northwest façade	Southeast
8	Town Hall, belfry detail	Southeast
9	Town Hall, southwest (front) façade, door detail	Northeast
10	Town Hall, meeting hall with painted theater curtain	Northeast
11	Town Hall and Hollow Church (c. 1900)	East
12	Common and bandstand (non-contributing)	South-Southeast
13	Civil War monument	Northeast
14	Civil War monument, detail	Northeast
15	World War I monument	East
16	Village cemetery entrance	Southwest

Wheelock Common Historic District

Wheelock, Caledonia County, VT



Scale:
1" = 150'
1cm = 18 m

--- = district boundary