

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Maine</b>
COUNTY: <b>Cumberland</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Neal Dow House**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**714 Congress Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Portland**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE: **Maine** CODE: COUNTY: **Cumberland** CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments Offices, WCTU & Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, % Mrs. George A. Brown, Executive Director**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**714 Congress Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Portland**

STATE:  
**Maine**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Cumberland County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**142 Federal Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Portland**

STATE:  
**Maine**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Listed in the National Register of Historic Places**

DATE OF SURVEY: **4/11/73**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Maine Historical Preservation Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**31 Western Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Augusta**

STATE:  
**Maine**

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1829, the Neal Dow House is a 17-room brick house in the late Federal style. The house is two stories with an attic, and is painted grey with brown trim. The shutters are painted black. Five unusually tall chimneys are situated on the perimeter of the building. Henry Clubb mentions the Dow residence in his 1856 history of the Maine liquor law:

"The house is of first-class character, being large and convenient, with spacious rooms on the ground floor, such as parlors, library, dining-room, and kitchen, with all the usual offices and appurtenances of a well-ordered family homestead, surrounded as it is with a well-kept garden, with pleasure grounds, and commanding a view of the magnificent scenery...."<sup>1</sup>

Irregular in plan, the house did not originally include the library, which was added in the 1830s and extended in 1875. The present condition of the Dow House, however, compares favorably with an engraving which appears in Clubb's book. Only a few relatively minor changes have been made. In the engraving, there is a parapet extending across the facade of the library addition; it apparently has been removed. A dowel fence, which once surrounded the grounds, now serves merely as a decoration along the front edge of the property only. At the entrance, a segmental transom and a Victorian hood on brackets--obviously out of keeping with the Federal-style house--have been added, as have the aluminum double doors à la 1960.

In 1971 the Dow House was restored at a cost of \$80,000, borne by the estate of Fred N. Dow, one of Neal Dow's sons. The entire property and all furnishings were willed by him to the Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, to be operated as a memorial to his father. Presently, office space is provided on the second floor for both the Maine and Portland WCTU, as well as for Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.

Unique possessions of the house are a set of English china bearing a portrait of Neal Dow, presented to his wife by British temperance colleagues, and testimonial silver presented to Dow by temperance groups in this country. The library of about 2,000 books is evidence of Neal Dow's lifelong devotion to reading, as well as a valuable source for research.

<sup>1</sup>The Maine Liquor Law (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1856), p. 66.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. 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) **1830-1897**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" 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

"His name will never be forgotten, nor his work undone," predicted a minister at the funeral of Neal Dow. Subsequent history perhaps does not confirm the assertion, but Neal Dow was very much a figure of national prominence in his own time. The "Napoleon of Temperance," as he has often been called, was an active proponent of that cause for no less than 70 years, from 1827 until his death in 1897.

Neal Dow is chiefly remembered as the author of the "Maine Law," the first state temperance act. With its passage in 1851, Dow's reputation as a temperance reformer became nationwide. He extended his crusade against the "infamous business" across the country and was twice invited to wage his campaign in England; Dow thus became the symbol of an international crusade to legislate the "demon rum" into oblivion. His influence has perhaps been accurately assessed by one historian, who believes that "[b]y his propaganda and his lessons in political strategy, he ... made straight the way for the next generation's national prohibition."<sup>1</sup>

Neal Dow's residence for some 67 years is a well preserved two-and-one-half-story house in the late Federal style. Five unusually tall chimneys, situated on the perimeter of the house, distinguish a structure "of first-class character, ... large and convenient...."<sup>2</sup> The Neal Dow House is both owned and occupied by the Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Biography

Born in Portland, Maine, Neal Dow (1804-1897) was early educated by his Quaker parents in the principles of temperance, industry, and thrift. He attended the Friends Academy in New Bedford, Massachusetts, but was

<sup>1</sup>Frank L. Byrne, Prophet of Prohibition: Neal Dow and His Crusade (Madison, Wisc.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1961), p. v.

<sup>2</sup>Henry S. Clubb, The Maine Liquor Law (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1856), p. 66.

Continued

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Byrne, Frank L. Prophet of Prohibition: Neal Dow and His Crusade.  
Madison, Wisc.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the  
Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1961.

Miner, A. A. "Neal Dow and His Life Work," New England Magazine,  
June, 1894, pp. 397-412.

Waterman, W. Randall. "Dow, Neal." Dictionary of American Biography.  
1943. Vol. V.

**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		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43 ° 39 ' 11 "	70 ° 16 ' 12 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **less than 1 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:  
**Carol Ann Poh and Robert C. Post, Survey Historians**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys,  
National Park Service**      DATE: **12/21/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street NW**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **District of Columbia**      CODE:

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Significance (page 1)

Neal Dow House

dissuaded from attending college by his parents. Instead he entered his father's tanning business, and eventually became a partner. Dow's "abounding British pluck and inexhaustible Quaker patience" made him what one author has called "a man with no jellyfish element in him."<sup>3</sup> He was successful in business and became, in fact, "one of Portland's leading men of affairs."<sup>4</sup>

At age 23 Dow made his first appeal for temperance. The Deluge Engine Company, for which he was a clerk, had voted to furnish liquor on the occasion of its anniversary celebration. Dow raised his voice in protest, he proved persuasive, and the vote was reversed. "Thus, in 1827, was born the world-renowned temperance orator."<sup>5</sup> At age 25 Dow joined the Portland Young Men's Temperance Society, then helped organize the Maine Temperance Union. By 1831 he had begun to urge the legal prohibition of liquor.

Neal Dow often said that "the Maine Law was born in a grog shop." On one occasion Dow was pleading in a Portland saloon for one of its victims, whose family was being robbed of its proper support, when the proprietor became outraged at Dow's interference with his legal prerogatives. He declared that he, too, had a family to support, as well as a lawful license to sell liquors. Dow replied, "So you have a license to sell, and propose to support your family by impoverishing others. With God's help I will change all this!"<sup>6</sup> Dow never forgot his vow.

Neal Dow was elected mayor of Portland in 1851, and he immediately urged the passage of a law "stringent in its provisions and summary in its processes" which would make it possible to drive the liquor traffic from the State. Dow himself authored the bill, which was given a public hearing on May 26, 1851, at Augusta. Convinced that Dow had the full support of the State behind him, both houses of the legislature promptly passed what was to become popularly known as the "Maine Law." With passage of the bill, Dow's reputation became nationwide.

<sup>3</sup>A. A. Miner, "Neal Dow and His Life Work," New England Magazine, June, 1894, p. 399.

<sup>4</sup>W. Randall Waterman, "Dow, Neal," Dictionary of American Biography, 1943, V, 411.

<sup>5</sup>Miner, "Neal Dow and His Life Work," p. 400.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 402.

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8. Significance (page 2)

Neal Dow House

Enforcement of the measure varied, of course, with the administrator whose duty it was to enforce it. In Portland it was executed vigorously. Liquors were seized and destroyed, often poured into sewers. "What a shame ... such a waste of property--"one citizen observed as this was being done. According to legend, Dow overheard the remark and declared, "It is very much as it used to be: formerly it went into the gutter, drunkard and all; now it goes into the gutter alone, and the drunkard is saved, a sober man."<sup>7</sup>

Dow was again elected mayor in 1855, and had scarcely begun his second term when there occurred the "June riot." The "Maine Law" was temporarily repealed by the legislature, but was reenacted in 1858. Much to his delight, Dow discovered that the "Maine Law" had become a synonym for prohibition. He embarked on extensive speaking tours, and across half the Nation won a sympathetic hearing for his principles, often urging audiences to adopt his political tactics.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Dow, an avid abolitionist, became colonel of the 13th Regiment of Maine Volunteers. He was commissioned a brigadier-general, was twice wounded, and captured. He spent eight months as a prisoner at Richmond and at Mobile, but was eventually freed in a prisoner exchange. Following the war, Dow wrote and spoke extensively in behalf of prohibition, traveling throughout both the United States and Great Britain. In 1880 he ran for President of the United States as the candidate of the Prohibition Party, and received 10,305 votes. Neal Dow, an "ambitious warrior who had fought to impose his views on the world,"<sup>8</sup> died in Portland in 1897 at the age of 93. He retained to the end an active--even vigorous--interest in his cause.

While it is true that Neal Dow originated and concentrated his appeals for temperance in the State of Maine, it is equally true that he extended his crusade against the "infamous business" across the Nation and throughout the English-speaking world. Historian Frank L. Byrne makes a convincing case for Dow's national significance:

"During a lifetime which almost spanned the 19th century, this son of a Portland tanner had become the symbol of an international crusade to legislate the Demon Rum into oblivion. For his own State of Maine, he had written the first rigorous law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor. In the 1850s,

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 407.

<sup>8</sup> Byrne, Prophet of Prohibition, p. 126.

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8. Significance (page 3)

Neal Dow House

urged on by his exhortations, twelve states had imposed varying degrees of prohibition and from as far away as Great Britain numerous disciples had lauded Dow's doctrine. By his propaganda and his lessons in political strategy, he had made straight the way for the next generation's national prohibition."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. v.