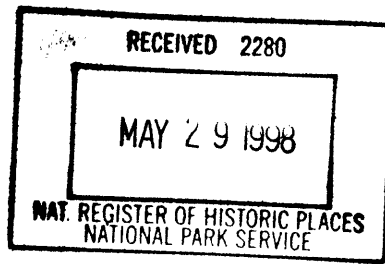


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



724

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 The Observer Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 126 Union Square N/A not for publication

city or town Dover-Foxcroft N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Piscataquis code 021 zip code 04426

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.)

Edward Thompson 5/19/98
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): _____

Edson H. Beall 6/26/98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

The Observer Building
Name of Property

Piscataquis, Maine
County and State

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.)
Contributing Noncontributing

_____ 1 _____ buildings
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ 1 _____ 0 _____ 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
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Multiple Dwelling
Commercial/Trade/Business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite
walls Wood/Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other Flat Iron Footprint

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

THE OBSERVER BUILDING

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

Located at the junction of Main and Pleasant streets in Dover-Foxcroft's commercial district, the Observer Building is a two-story gable roofed frame building that is distinguished by its triangular "flat iron" footprint. The building is sheathed entirely in clapboards, and it stands on a granite block foundation.

Facing west, the narrow two-bay front elevation is comprised of a side entrance that is flanked by a three sided bay window installed in the late 1960s. (This remodeling resulted in the alteration of the original fenestration pattern that had a central entrance framed by windows.) The second floor features a pair of symmetrically placed two-over-one double hung windows, and a small two-over-six window punctuates the tympanum of the pedimented gable. Corner pilasters rise to a narrow overhanging cornice that carries across the side elevations and ends in short gable end returns at the rear.

The south side elevation contains nine asymmetrically placed two-over-one windows on the first story and eight on the second story. There are eight two-over-ones and a pair of doorways with bracketed hoods on the first story of the north side elevation, as well as eight windows on the second story. A narrow shed roofed addition with one door extends across the first story on the rear wall, whereas a small rectangular window is located on the second story, and a pair of two-over-twos are positioned in the gable peak.

One of the most visually striking features of the exterior is the shape of the roof which, unlike the flat roofs found on most "flat iron" buildings, is a gable. Although the framing of the roof does not appear to be particularly unusual, its appearance is distinctive due to the fact that its slope varies from a steep pitch at the narrower west end to a broader pitch at the wider east end. The effect of this design is that the roof appears to be curved in a manner that is not unlike the hull of a ship. Two brick flues punctuate the south side of the roof just below the ridge.

Inside, the first floor has a small office in the west end, behind which is the production room and the press room, both of which contain some of the original printing equipment. The existing stairway that leads from the office to a second floor meeting room is a late 1960s addition. The interior is finished in narrow tongue and groove sheathing. The second floor, which is accessed from the easternmost door on the north side, contains a series of small rooms that open off a wide hall. This hall features wainscot and a chair rail, as well as both simple Greek Revival and Queen Anne style window and door surrounds with corner blocks. There are two additional rooms with closets in the attic, although they do not occupy the entire space.

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.)

- 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.)

Property is:

- 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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1854

1905-1948

Significant Dates

1854

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

THE OBSERVER BUILDING

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

Constructed in 1854 for William Sargent, the Observer Building is one of only a very small number of so-called "flat iron" buildings in Maine. The distinctiveness of this building is enhanced by the fact that it is capped by a gable roof whose variable roof slope gives it a curved appearance not unlike that of the hull of a ship. The building is eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion A for its long time use housing the offices and printing press of *The Piscataquis Observer*, and criterion C for its architectural significance.

According to local historians, the Observer Building was originally constructed by William Sargent for use as a tenement. In July of 1893, it was acquired by W.J. Eldridge who apparently planned to convert the first floor into a grocery store. In 1902 Eldridge leased the building to A.L. Cohn, but when his business failed the following year, Eldridge traded the property for farms owned by George Doore. Doore remodeled the first floor and then leased the space to the Observer Publishing Company, printers of the weekly newspaper *The Piscataquis Observer*. The company acquired the building in 1917, and continued to publish the newspaper from this location until 1996. On July 14, 1997, Northeast Publishing Company (which had acquired the Observer Publishing Company) gave the building to the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society which plans to establish a museum in it.

The history of *The Piscataquis Observer* is told in the following sketch that appeared in a 1908 *Souvenir*:

The first newspaper published in Dover, and in Piscataquis County, was issued June 1, 1838. Its name was the Piscataquis Herald and the publisher was George V. Edes. The Observer is the outgrowth of the Herald and is, consequently, nearly 70 years old -- one of the oldest papers in Maine. The paper continued under the name of the Herald until April 15, 1842, when the name was changed to the Piscataquis Farmer, and that in turn to the Piscataquis Observer in November, 1847. George V. Edes published the Observer until in the early 70's when he took his son, Samuel D. Edes, as a partner, the firm being called G.V. Edes & Son. This partnership continued until January 1, 1875, when Fred D. Barrows became a partner and the firm name was changed to Edes & Barrows. The paper was published by Edes & Barrows until March, 1888, when they sold the business to the Observer Publishing Company of which L.P. Evans was treasurer. In April 1900, Mr. Evans purchased the stock held by the other members of the company and has since carried on the business under the name of the Observer Publishing Company, taking editorial charge of the Observer in October, 1895. It has been the policy of the present management to keep the plant in good condition and it ranks well with the country offices in the State....(page 19)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

THE OBSERVER BUILDING

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

The Piscataquis Observer was one of about 100 weekly newspapers published in Maine at the turn-of-the-century (*Maine Register*, 1900-01, pp. 227-32). Reporting principally on news and events of local interest, these newspapers were important community institutions, a fact that is evident in their continued survival in the era of radio and television. By 1940-41 just over fifty weeklies were still in business (*Maine Register*, 1940-41, p.212), a figure only slightly higher than at present. Although it is no longer published in The Observer Building, *The Piscataquis Observer* is one of the oldest weekly newspapers that is still in print in Maine.

From an architectural standpoint, the Observer Building is noteworthy both in the context of the limited number of “flat iron” buildings in the state and in the unusual construction technique employed in its roof. Of the extant buildings of the type, the oldest is believed to be the Charles Q. Clapp/H.H. Hay Block (NR 1/31/78), which was erected in Portland in 1826 (its third story is a 1922 addition). The most recent example is Cony High School (NR 9/29/88) in Augusta, which was completed in 1932. Unlike the Observer Building, these two structures are of brick construction and have flat roofs. In contrast, the Observer Building displays Maine’s tradition of wooden construction as well as the inventiveness and skill of its builders. The curved shape of the roof as its slope changes from front to back is particularly illustrative of this native skill. One tradition associated with this design states that a shipbuilder was hired to design and build the roof, an intriguing possibility given the fact that it resembles the hull of a vessel.

The Observer Building
Name of Property

Piscataquis, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less Than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	9	4	8	2	0	8	0	5	0	0	3	1	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

3

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

2

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4

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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 Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1998

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

city or town Augusta, state Maine 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

THE OBSERVER BUILDING

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

Bibliography

Maine Register and Legislative Manual. Editions of 1900-01, 1940-41, and 1997-98.

Souvenir: Dover, Foxcroft, Guilford, Sangerville, Dexter, Newport, Corinna. 1908.

Stevens, Louis. "The 'Flat Iron' Building." Typescript copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

THE OBSERVER BUILDING

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of less than one acre occupies the Town of Dover-Foxcroft tax map 40, lot 107.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire village lot that is historically associated with the Observer Building.