

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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JUL 23 1979  
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SEP 10 1979  
DATE ENTERED

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Colby Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

Colby Mansion

**LOCATION**

*N of Waterbury on VT 100*

STREET & NUMBER

Route 100, Colbyville

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Waterbury

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

023

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: Vacant

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. Steven Cram

STREET & NUMBER

2868 Jermanton Road

CITY, TOWN

Oakton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 22124

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Town of Waterbury

CITY, TOWN

Waterbury

STATE

Vermont

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1976

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Colby Mansion is a large, nearly cubical-looking frame house with clapboard siding. It is two stories on a stone foundation which is covered in pressed metal. The house is three broadly-spaced bays across the front facade and two bays deep. The shallow hipped roof is sheathed in slate and is pierced at its apex by a single chimney.

The central entrance is sheltered by a one-story, one-bay entry porch with turned balusters and whose roof is carried on fluted square posts with molded capitals. The cornice of the porch roof is supported by a row of brackets. Directly above the entry, at the second floor level, is a projecting bay containing two windows on its principal facade and one on each side facade; this bay is capped by a pedimented gable.

The window and door enframements are finely detailed. First floor windows (which, like all others, are 1/1) are within a sawn casing featuring a segmental-arch cap and ornamented knees. Second floor window surrounds include molded arched caps and footed sills.

The most elaborate surround is that of the main entry. It consists of a boldly arched architrave (reminiscent of a segmental-arch fanlight) with sawn knee ornament near the porch floor. The double-leaf doors are panelled in the lower portion and contain frosted glass above.

Detail on the mansion is lavishly used, and gives a distinctly Victorian impression of having been applied rather than integrated into the structural system (as in the case of heavy entablature on a Greek Revival building). The main cornice of the house is supported for its full length by sawn brackets which are rather closely spaced. Brackets also continue around the projecting second story bay. Corners of the house are defined by justified wooden quoins, visually constraining the wide spacing of the windows. The mass of the entrance porch is off set by one-story, semi-hexagonal bay windows on each of the side facades, which have window surrounds similar to those of other first floor windows and a small bracketed cornice, as on the porch.

A more restrained ell projects to the rear from the center of the rear facade. This too has a bracketed cornice, and symmetrical porches on each side and attached to the main mass of the house. (One of these has been enclosed, in one of the few exterior alterations to the house).

On the interior, which is largely intact, there are heavy walnut door and window surrounds, cornices, and baseboards. Several rooms have pressed tin ceilings, some with wooden rosettes and early electric chandeliers. The bedrooms upstairs have original marble sinks

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1870

BUILDER/ARCHITECT George J. Colby

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colby Mansion in Waterbury, Vermont, is significant primarily for its design, which was consciously directed towards maintaining the health of its occupants. It was designed and built by George J. Colby, a local industrialist with no known architectural training. By disseminating his ideas on proper house construction, however, he joins the ranks of late-19th century innovators who were attempting to improve basic ways of life through modern conveniences.

Colby was well-known locally for his financial empire, the components of which included the manufacture of willow ware and wringers; the invention of a bark-peeling machine; and a print shop and machine shop. He also wrote political pamphlets and helped organize the local library and the cemetery association.

The house was described when built as possibly the finest in the state outside Montpelier. It illustrated Colby's views on healthful living, which included a symmetrical design, forced hot air heat, balloon frame construction, well-lit and ventilated basements, the avoidance of a mansard roof, natural-finished interior woodwork, and indoor plumbing with a sink in each bedroom. He also rejected the use of classical orders.

Colby published his ideas in a series of eight articles entitled "Household Architecture" appearing in "The Household" in 1871. The house was also the subject of a series of stereo views (interior and exterior) which show the house to be substantially as it is today. The captions on these views list Colby as "Architect."

The house is thus significant not only as a well-designed, executed, and preserved house of the early 1870's, but further as a physical statement of the philosophy of its designer. It was a straight-forward attempt at improving the living conditions of the time, and, not incidentally, very attractive as well.

The property included with this nomination is one acre, more or less, consisting of the property of the current owner. This parcel of land is sufficient for the significance of the building which is primarily architectural.

