

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire	
COUNTY: Rockingham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON: John Paul Jones House

AND/OR HISTORIC: (Purcell-Jones-Langdon House)

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Middle and State Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Portsmouth

STATE: New Hampshire    CODE: 0380    COUNTY: Rockingham    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 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 type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Mr. Arnold J. Grover, President, Portsmouth Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: Middle and State Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Portsmouth    STATE: New Hampshire    CODE:   

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:   

CITY OR TOWN: Exeter    STATE: New Hampshire    CODE:   

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:   

DATE OF SURVEY:     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:   

STREET AND NUMBER:   

CITY OR TOWN:    STATE:    CODE:   

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Paul Jones House was built by Captain Gregory Purcell, mariner and merchant, in 1758 and here he resided until his death in October 1776. His widow, Sarah, then took in roomers until she sold the house in 1783.

John Paul Jones visited Portsmouth twice, in 1776-77 and 1781-82. It is not known for certain where he lived during the first period, but there is ample documentary evidence to show that he rented a room at \$10 per week at Mrs. Purcell's boardinghouse during the period 1781-82. The house is a large rectangular 2-1/2 story wood structure with gambrel roof and two interior chimneys. The Georgian dwelling is five bays wide and two bays deep. The center door in the front (south) facade is topped by a segmental pediment and first-floor windows by triangular pediments. The house has a center hall plan with two rooms located on either side of the hall. The hall extends through the house but is divided by means of a partition into two unequal portions, a small hall in the rear and a larger stair hall in front. The stair hall is also divided by means of an arch supported by pilasters into two sections. The stairway with elaborate balusters is set against the right (east) wall and is lighted by an arched window set in the rear wall. To the left of the hall, in front, is a large parlor with a panelled overmantel and wainscoting on the other walls, and behind this, the counting room. To the right of the center hall is a large dining room and, in the rear, the original kitchen. A later kitchen and service rooms are located in a two-story frame wing that were added to the northeast corner of the house in the early 19th century. The first floor rooms of the wing contains museum exhibits.

The first floor plan is repeated on the second floor, where there are four bedrooms. John Paul Jones' room was located in the southeast corner room. There are five more chambers on the third floor plus a full attic. Except for the dining room, which was redecorated in the early 19th century, the house is little-altered. The John Paul Jones House was acquired by the Portsmouth Historical Society in 1919 and serves as their headquarters. Furnished as a historical house exhibit, the building is open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1781-82

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"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Paul Jones House is the boardinghouse in which the naval hero resided for two years, 1781-82, while supervising the construction of the America, a ship of the line for the Continental Navy. The dwelling, built in 1758, is the only surviving structure in the United States with which John Paul Jones had any significant associations. The residence is little-altered.

History

John Paul Jones, naval officer and hero, known as John Paul until 1773, was born in southwestern Scotland in the parish of Kirkbean, Kirkeudbrightshire in 1747. The son of an estate gardener, Jones briefly attended the parish school in Kirkbean and at the age of 12 entered into the service of a shipowner of the port of Whitehaven as an apprentice. His first voyage took him to Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1760, where his elder brother William was established as a tailor. During the stay of his ship at this port he lived with his brother and employed his spare time studying navigation. Owing to reverses in the affairs of his employer, his apprenticeship was terminated and Jones obtained the berth of third mate on a slave ship. In 1766, at the age of 19, he became first mate on another slaver. In 1769-1770 he commanded a merchantman out of Dumfries and made two voyages in her to the West Indies. While at Tobago during the second voyage, he flogged a ship carpenter for neglect of duty and a few weeks later the man died at sea. Charged with murder and jailed, Jones was able to establish his innocence. In 1773, again in Tobago, as the master of a ship out of London, Jones' crew mutinied and in a fracas its ring-leader was killed, by rushing upon a sword in the hand of the master--according to John Paul's account. As the witnesses to the killing were hostile to the master, his friends advised him to go to America incognito and to remain there until a court martial could be assembled at the island. According to this advice he probably proceeded to Fredericksburg, Virginia, (or possibly North Carolina) and added "Jones" to his name, probably in order to conceal his identity.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

New Hampshire, A Guide to the Granite State (American Guide Series)  
(Boston, 1938), 236.

Portsmouth, An Architectural Evolution 1664-1890 (Reprinted from  
New Hampshire Profiles, December 1970).

Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. X, 183-188.

**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
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43°	04'	33"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		70°	45'	39"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/10th 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: Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE 2/14/72

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE D.C. 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.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Significance: (1) John Paul Jones House

The outbreak of the War for Independence found Jones unemployed, living partly on the generosity of strangers. Going to Philadelphia before the Continental Congress had organized a navy, he established friendly relations with Joseph Hewes, a merchant of North Carolina, and Robert Morris, wealthy Philadelphia merchant, two influential members of the Congress greatly interested in naval affairs. On October 13, 1775 Congress began enacting its first naval legislation. On December 7, 1775, Jones was commissioned lieutenant. Before that date he had been employed in fitting out the Alfred, 300 tons, the first naval ship procured by Congress and the first to fly the Continental "Flag of Freedom," when hoisted by Jones on December 3. In the first navy list, Jones's name led the lieutenants and he was the ranking officer in the list chosen from the colonies south of Pennsylvania. In the first expedition of the Continental navy, early in 1776, resulting in the capture of New Providence and an engagement with the warship Glasgow, Jones, serving as the first lieutenant of the Alfred, had little chance to distinguish himself. It was quite otherwise when later in the year he was given command of the Providence, and still later of a small fleet and was promoted to Captain. He captured 16 prizes and destroyed the fisheries at Canso and Isle Madame; and in a second cruise he took the transport Melish, laden with a valuable cargo of soldiers' clothing, a privateer of 10 guns, and several smaller vessels. On October 10, 1776, Congress determined the rank of the naval captains and placed Jones 18th in its list. He protested, giving excellent reasons in support of his claim to higher rank. As a newcomer in America who had entered the navy by way of the South, he was unpopular with many of its officers, mostly from the North, and his undisguised contempt of some of them aggravated his unpopularity.

Jones arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in October 1776 to supervise the construction of the Continental sloop Ranger. On June 14, 1777 Congress appointed Jones to the command of the vessel. When Jones left Portsmouth on the newly completed Ranger in November 1777, he bore news of the great victory at Saratoga to the French Court. The marine committee of Congress ordered him to take his ship to France and report to the American commissioners at Paris, and they assured Jones that he would be given command of the frigate Indien, building on Continental account at Amsterdam. On arriving in France in December 1777, he suffered the severe disappointment of failing to receive the expected command, as the commissioners for political reasons transferred the Indien to the king of France.

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8. Significance: (2) John Paul Jones House

On April 10, 1778, Jones sailed from Brest in the Ranger for the Irish Sea and the waters long familiar to him. First, he descended upon Whitehaven and after spiking the guns of its forts attempted to burn its shipping, but his plans miscarried. Next, he visited the Scottish coast for the purpose of seizing the Earl of Selkirk, whom he proposed to hold as a hostage for the proper treatment of American prisoners, but failed to find the Earl at home. His crew, however, seized some of the family plate, which Jones later purchased from them and returned to the family. Lastly, on April 24, he captured the British naval sloop Drake after a sharp action of about one hour--the chief event of the cruise. Jones regained Brest on May 28, 1778, after an absence of 28 days, with numerous prisoners, having taken seven prizes and having greatly alarmed the British coast. In June, now famous, Jones was called to Paris for consultation. On February 4, 1779 De Sartine, the French minister of marine, wrote to him that the King had placed under his command the French ship Duras of 40 guns--a worn-out East Indiaman which Jones renamed the Bonhomme Richard (Poor Richard) as a compliment to Franklin. Plans for a joint naval and military expedition against some of the larger English towns, in which the troops were to be commanded by Lafayette and the sea forces by Jones, was planned by Franklin and the French government, but was finally abandoned. By the end of the summer a small squadron consisting of five naval vessels and two privateers had been fitted out and was at L'Orient ready to sail. The fleet, composed of diverse and discordant elements, had but one bond of union, its commander, Jones. It sailed under American colors, but its expense was borne by the French government.

Jones went to sea on August 14, 1779, and sailing along the west coast of Ireland and around Scotland, reached the east coast of Yorkshire, having taken 17 ships and made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Leith and lay it under contribution. On September 23, off Flamborough Head, he fell in with the Baltic trade fleet of 41 sail, conveyed by his Majesty's ships Serapis, 44 guns, Captain Richard Pearson, and Countess of Scarborough, 20 guns, Commander Thomas Piercey. Only three of Jones' ships took part in the engagement. The Pallas forced the Countess of Scarborough to surrender and the American vessel Alliance, owing to her disgruntled commander, the eccentric and probably insane Captain Pierre Landais, fired only a few shots all of which hit Jones' vessel. By skillful maneuvering Jones brought the Richard alongside the Serapis and lashed the two ships together, stem to stern, with the muzzles of their cannon touching. The engagement, which lasted more than three hours, ranks as one of the most desperate and sanguinary sea-fights in naval history. In response to Pearson's question, "Has your ship struck?" Jones replied: "I have not yet begun to fight!" The Serapis was finally compelled to strike her colors. On October 3, 1779 Jones reached

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8. Significance: (3) John Paul Jones House

Texel, Holland with his squadron, but not with the Richard, for she was so badly injured that she sank the second day after the fight. Here Jones was beset with many difficulties, as Holland was at this time neutral. Finally, the French government took possession of the prizes, the prisoners, and the fleet, with the exception of the Alliance, to which Jones transferred his flag. Ordered by the Dutch to leave, he sailed in December, and eluding the British ships watching for him, cruised for a week or more off Cape Finisterre and to the southward in search of prizes before putting into Corunna. Thence he sailed for L'Orient, where he arrived on February 10, 1780. He began immediately to refit the Alliance preparatory to returning to America.

In April Jones went to Paris to expedite the sale of his prize, hoping to obtain money for his dissatisfied crew. His fame had preceded him and he found the French capital, always avid for a novelty, eager to lionize him. Fate has cast him for a part he was delighted to play. About 5-feet 6-inches tall, well shaped below his head and shoulders and rather round shouldered, Jones had "a visage fierce and warlike, and wore the appearance of great application to study, which he was fond of." Vain, with indomitable courage and unfaltering faith in himself, Jones was also a master in promoting his own interests. Now as the popular hero of the American Revolution, he was everywhere received with applause and adulation. The Queen presented him with a fob chain and seal, and the King with a gold-hilted sword of fine workmanship. As a further reward the King sent to his minister in Philadelphia the cross of the Institution of Military Merit, with instructions to confer it on the naval hero after obtaining the consent of Congress. As a young bachelor, Jones was also lionized by Parisian women, while in return, he often composed verse for his lady loves.

When Jones finally returned to L'Orient, the command of the Alliance was seized by Landais, her former commander, supported by many of her officers and crew and by Arthur Lee, at one time American commissioner. Jones finally yielded rather than insist on his rights at the cost of bloodshed and the ship sailed for America without him. He next took command of the Ariel, loaned by the French government for the transportation of military supplies to America. Sailing in December, he captured the British ship Triumph, which however escaped by a discreditable ruse. A conspiracy among the Englishmen of the crew, he suppressed by placing the leaders in irons. On February 18, 1781, he arrived at Philadelphia, having been absent from America for 3-1/4 years.

On February 27, 1781, Congress, after expressing its "high sense of the distinguished bravery and military conduct" of Jones, consented to his acceptance of the cross of the Institution of Military Merit. On April 14

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8. Significance: (4) John Paul Jones House

Congress formally thanked Jones. While in Philadelphia he brought to the attention of Congress his early grievance in respect to naval rank and a committee of that body proposed to make him a rear-admiral. Some of the older naval officers remonstrated and prevented a resolution to that effect from passing. A compromise was agreed to and on June 26 Jones was unanimously elected to command the America, the first and only 74-gun ship in the Continental Navy, then building at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It was also at this time that the Board of Admiralty examined Jones respecting his European enterprises and elicited from him detailed replies, in every respect highly creditable to him. Before leaving Philadelphia he submitted his personal accounts showing that he had not received a dollar of pay for his five years of service. Reaching Portsmouth late in August 1781, Jones remained there more than a year engaged in supervising the construction of the America. When at last the ship was launched in 1782, and Congress had presented her to the French government, Jones returned to Philadelphia. His friend Robert Morris, now agent of marine, tried in vain to procure for him a small squadron. Jones now succeeded in obtaining the permission of Congress to embark on board the French fleet of Marquis de Vaudreuil, then at Boston. Given quarters on the flagship, Triomphante, Jones cruised with the fleet four months in the West Indies, although part of the time he was dangerously ill.

On November 1, 1783, Congress, in response to an application by Jones, who had resigned from the navy, passed a resolution recommending him to the American minister in Paris as agent to solicit, under the direction of the minister, the payment of monies due to America for the prizes taken in European waters by his ships. A few days later, after giving bond to Robert Morris, superintendent of finance, for the sum of \$200,000, Jones sailed for France. Soon after his arrival at Paris, Franklin empowered him to act as agent for the collection of prize monies. Negotiations began with the French government on February 1, 1784 and an agreement was reached in the following October, but on one pretext or another payment was long delayed. Jones's bill for his services was disputed by the American board of treasury, but was allowed by Congress in view of the difficulties of his mission.

In 1787 Jones returned to America to settle some of his private affairs and in March 1788 arrived at Copenhagen to present his claims against Denmark. Although received by the King, the Danes refused to negotiate. During Jones's last visit to America, in the summer and fall of 1787, Congress, on October 16, resolved unanimously that a gold medal should be presented to him in commemoration of his valor and brilliant services, and that Thomas Jefferson, the American minister in Paris, should have it executed, with proper devices. Jones was the only officer of the Continental navy thus distinguished.

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8. Significance: (5) John Paul Jones House

Returning to Paris in December 1787, he received an offer from the Empress Catherine to enter the Russian navy and take part in her war with the Turks. Accepting with rank of rear-admiral, he proceeded via St. Petersburg to the Black Sea and on May 26, 1788 raised his flag on the Vladimir, taking command of a squadron of sailing ships. Because of politics and jealousies within the Russian fleet, Jones's position was soon an impossible one. He played an important part in several successful engagements with the Turkish fleet, but the credit was given to others. He was steadily undermined by the intrigues of his enemies and in October 1788 was deprived of his command. His only reward was the decoration of the cross of the Order of St. Anne. In September 1789 he left St. Petersburg for Paris, where he arrived in June 1790, having been sounded on the way in respect to his acceptance of a commission in the Swedish navy to fight Russia.

Now a forgotten hero and still a bachelor, Jones spent the last two years of his life in Paris, in comfortable lodgings with a few faithful friends. His health, long impaired, now slowly declined. He died at Paris on July 18, 1792, leaving a respectable estate. Although he detested the French Revolution, the National Assembly of France, desirous of honoring the memory of a man who had "so well served the cause of liberty," sent a deputation of 12 of its members to his funeral. Jones was buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Paris, in a leaden coffin in order that his remains, in case the United States should claim them, might be the more easily removed.

A movement for the return of Jones's remains to America began in 1845 and continued until 1851, when they came to naught because the relatives of Jones in Scotland interfered. In 1899 General Horace Porter, the American ambassador in Paris, began an extensive and laborious search for the remains and six years later cabled the government at Washington that he had found them and that the identification was complete in every particular. In the summer of 1905 they were conveyed to Annapolis, Maryland, by a squadron of American naval vessels under the command of Rear-Admiral Charles D. Sigsbee, accompanied by a French cruiser. In the following year commemorative exercises were held in the armory of the Naval Academy with President Theodore Roosevelt, Ambassador Jusserand, and General Porter present. In 1913 the remains were placed in the crypt of the chapel of the Naval Academy, in one of the most ornamental and elaborate tombs in America, erected by Congress at a cost of \$75,000. Porter's proof of identification, while not absolute, appears to have carried conviction to most minds. In 1912 a monument to Jones, erected by the Federal Government, was unveiled in Potomac Park, Washington, D.C.