

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received SEP 10 1980

date entered 8 98

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic William Hale House

and/or common Lafayette House

**2. Location**

street & number 5 Hale Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Dover \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Strafford code 017

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

street & number 5 Hale Street

city, town Dover \_\_\_ vicinity of state New Hampshire

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Strafford County Courthouse

street & number County Farm Road

city, town Dover state New Hampshire

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title New Hampshire Architecture Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records New Hampshire Historical Society

city, town Concord, state New Hampshire

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1890</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The William Hale House is a rectangular, three-story, frame building, sided with narrow clapboards that come down to a waterboard just above the foundation. The corner boards are thin; and the space between each story is outlined by a board stringcourse on all four sides. It is three bays wide by five long, and measures thirty-six by forty-eight feet. The roof is low-pitched and hipped.

The front facade (which faces north) has, on the first story, a central portico, with two windows on each side; on the second, five windows; and on the third, five half-size windows. The portico, supported by two attenuated, fluted columns, roughly Roman Doric in order, and two matching pilasters, shelters an arched doorway flanked by sidelights. The semi-circular fanlight is webbed with tracery, the pattern of which--three radiating bars and two banks of semicircles opposing the curve of the arch--rather resembles that of half an umbrella seen from above.

In the tracery of the sidelights the semi-circles oppose one another and cusp to form a series of four curved lozenges down the center of the pane. The windows are of the sash type, and all are flanked by louvered shutters on the exterior and by Indian shutters on the first floor of the interior. Those windows on the first and second stories are of six over six lights, the panes measuring eleven by fifteen inches; those on the third story are of three over three lights with panes eleven by sixteen inches. The muntins are slender, the sills and cornices plain. The windows throughout the house conform to this pattern, except that some in and toward the rear of the building, for various reasons, lack their shutters.

In the center of the eastern facade is a second doorway. Its wooden keystone arch and fanlight are exactly similar to those of the front door; but it is flanked by two plain pilasters, instead of sidelights, and has a finely worked entablature: dentils and a carved frieze of triglyphs and stylized rosettes. The three bays of the western facade are occupied by windows alone. There are three flared chimney stacks: one at each end of the house, one at the rear center.

Of particular note as decorative elements are the modillions and the dentils on the cornice at the eaves of the house; the dentils especially, since they are one of the unifying motifs of the house and appear not only in all the exterior cornices, but in the interior cornices of what one might term the "public" parts of the house: hallway, parlor, etc.

Much of the interior has been altered, but it retains a number of significant features, chief among them the staircase along the left-hand side of the central hallway. Curving away from the newel post, the balustrade ascends straight along the angle of the stair to the second floor, turns in a tight hairpin to the other side of the slender well to run the length of a narrow hallway, and again turns tightly to climb the flight, directly over the one below, from the second to the third floors. The string board of the first flight has panels, one riser high and two treads long, at the end of each stair, on which are mounted openwork brackets with a scroll pattern. There are dentils under the cornices in both the first and second floor hallways.

On the right side of the first floor hallway are the "big parlor" and the dining room. There are dentils under the cornices in these rooms and, in the parlor, an incised frieze of triglyphs and rosettes. This pattern is repeated in carving on the interior lintel of the room's doorway with a slight variation: in the endblocks over the jambs the rosettes are further stylized to fit an elliptical outline, rather than the circular on the motif takes elsewhere in the house. Triglyphs are also incised on the molding that belts this room at waist height.

In the other rooms that retain their original proportions--the "little parlor" on the left of the entrance and the two bedrooms off the second floor hallway--the woodwork is plain, save for the arch leading into the little parlor's alcove. One other detail is worth noting: the doors echo the bays of the house, their top panels, like the third-story windows being only about half the size of the lower two.

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## 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** 1806 **Builder/Architect** Bradbury Johnson (Plans), George & Edward Pendexter (Builders).

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The William Hale House is the finest Federal-style dwelling ever constructed in Dover, New Hampshire, and represents that town's mercantile prosperity at its peak, immediately before the community's economic base shifted from commerce to industry. The house is one of very few dwellings in New Hampshire's seacoast region which are documented in respect to their architects. This documentation proves that the dwelling was designed by Bradbury Johnson, the most advanced and original builder-architect in coastal New Hampshire during the early Federal period. As the only dwelling firmly documented as a design by Johnson, the Hale House is significant not only in its local context, but also in the larger architectural history of southeastern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine.

Architecture: The contract for construction of the William Hale House, specifying that the exterior of the dwelling was to be completed by May, 1806, states that the structure was to be built "agreeable to a plan drawn by Bradbury Johnson for said Hale." This proof of the authorship of the design of the house placed the building in the mainstream of architectural development in the Piscataqua region of New Hampshire and Maine during the Federal period. Bradbury Johnson (1766-1819) was the region's most skilled builder-architect during the early 1800s. His designs included meeting houses and public buildings, some of which were once attributed to such other designers as Charles Bulfinch of Boston. The Hale House is the only dwelling solidly documented as Johnson's design.

Johnson was born in nearby Epping, New Hampshire, in 1766 but was trained as a builder in the inland town of Sanbornton where his father, a joiner, moved in 1776. Returning to the seacoast town of Exeter, New Hampshire, in 1785, Johnson at first worked in association with Ebenezer Clifford (1746-1821), and older joiner, builder, architect and inventor.<sup>1</sup> The two men worked together on the 1794 Phillips Exeter Academy building, which was described in 1796 by Dr. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, as "superior to any other building destined to the same purpose within my knowledge."<sup>2</sup> In 1798, Johnson again cooperated with Clifford in constructing the Exeter First Parish meeting house, which still stands in somewhat altered condition and forms a focal point of the town's local historic district. A contemporary newspaper account of the dedication of this building credited Johnson as "the chief architect, both in planning and executing."<sup>3</sup> The structure was widely praised and in 1803 was visited by architect Samuel McIntire of Salem, Massachusetts, in preparation for his designing that town's South Church. Johnson and Clifford are also credited with the design of the unique Samuel Tenney House in Exeter a year or two later.<sup>4</sup>

While living in Exeter, Johnson served as the master joiner, and almost certainly the designer, of the market house in Portsmouth (1800), a brick structure which was described by Dwight as "the handsomest of the kind within my knowledge."<sup>5</sup> In 1802, Johnson moved to Saco, Maine (then Pepperrellborough, Massachusetts), where he built that town's First Parish meeting house. This wooden structure, regarded at its completion as the largest and most elegant in the district of Maine, was described by Dwight in 1807 as "a new and beautiful church; a structure superior to any other which I have seen in this district, and inferior to very few in New England."<sup>5</sup> Johnson is also said to have built several dwellings in Saco, though documentation for these structures has not yet been found.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dwight, Timothy. Travels in New England and New York. 4 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969.  
 Flanders, Louis W. A Short History of the Foundings of St. Thomas' Church. Dover, NH: n.p., 1939.

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## 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Dover, NH - Maine

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A 

1	9	3	4	7	6	5	0	4	7	8	3	8	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

**Verbal boundary description and justification:** The nominated property includes city lot 115, of sheet 9 of the Dover tax assessor's map. ~~On the accompanying map the nominated property is outlined in red.~~ *MAP NOT SENT. 3m 11/18/80*

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Ballentine and Bill Maloney

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 7, 1980

street & number 9 Orange Street telephone 692-3727

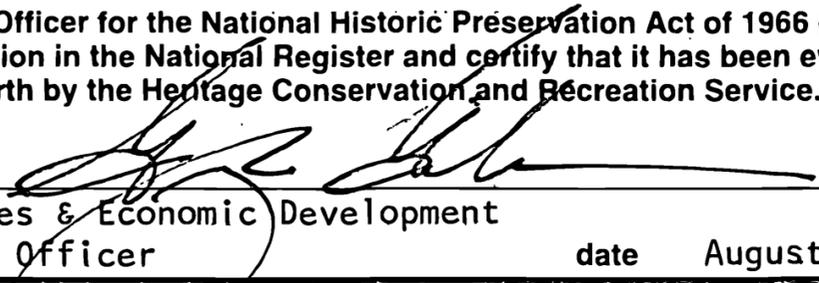
city or town Somersworth state New Hampshire

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date August 5, 1980

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

*Anna ...*  
 Keeper of the National Register date 11/18/80

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration



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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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The back facade of the house has been structurally altered by the addition, in 1951, of a pitched-roof, clapboarded shed that connects it to the barn-like church hall, a building of cement block construction, also built in 1951. The shed could not be removed, unless one was willing to undertake a reconstruction; but the church hall could be removed with no effect on the house. One must, however, note that when the house was on its original site, it did have a shed running off the back, connecting it to barns and a carriage house, and that the present shed, in exterior appearance, is an adequate substitute.

The only other way in which the exterior of the house has been altered (except for the easily removable boarding on the sides of the front portico) is in the placement of the chimney stacks: originally there were two chimneys in the front of the house and one over the left rear, descending to fireplaces in the parlors and kitchen through the bedrooms on the floors above. The only mantle now in evidence, though, is in the big parlor; and that is not the original one, which was given away when the chimneys were dismantled as part of the preparation for moving the house in 1890. Other interior alterations include: the removal of a staircase, which led from the side door to the second floor, to make room for modern sanitary facilities; the knocking down and putting up of partitions on the third floor, the first, some time shortly after 1901, to create club rooms for the people of the parish, the second to remodel the space into an apartment; the remodeling of the left side of the parish (which space is currently used as a thrift shop); and the modernization of the kitchen.

As previously mentioned, the William Hale House was moved in 1890. Originally it was located some 150 feet away on the site of the present-day Dover City Hall. At that time it faced east, onto Central Avenue, overlooking the bend in the Coheco River, where, at the time of its construction in 1806, there was a wharf on which William Hale had his store. (The Clarostat building stands there today.) Its grounds were large, extending, east to west, from Central Avenue (then Central Street) to a point past the present Public Library and (old) High School buildings; and north to south from the present-day St. Thomas Street to the far side of the property now occupied by the house and the (new) St. Thomas Church.

The front part of the property was fenced, to keep stray cows out of the gardens and the ornamental pool that, shaded by trees, (elms and firs mostly) surrounded the house. Sheds, barns, and a carriage house stood west and south of the house; back of them the land was field. In 1840 St. Thomas' Church purchased the lot immediately north of the house from Mr. Hale and built a wooden Gothic Revival church. In 1889 the old Dover Town Hall burned; and the lots of the Hale House (all the rest of the property, except the present site of the house and the new church, had gone by then, for various reasons) and the church were taken by eminent domain as the site for the new (present) City Hall. The house was moved; the church razed for the lumber.

The effect of the move on the house has been largely that of the loss of its grounds and prominent position on Dover's major street; stripped of these elements it is no longer as easy to appreciate that for many years the house was Dover's most elegant. But its principal glory--its architecture--remains little changed. It may be well to remember that, given what seemed until very recently an almost heroic insensitivity on the part of Dover's community to its heritage, had the property not been taken by the town and the house moved in 1890, it most probably would have been demolished some time in the ninety years since: the possibilities of the old property could hardly have gone unremarked.

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(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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The house is well-placed at its present site. The church's land includes by virtue of single ownership St. Thomas' Church, a fine rubble-stone structure designed by the Boston architect Henry Vaughan and built in 1891-93 (so preserving the historic relationship between the house and the church); and the rector's residence, a white, woodframe, 3-story house, built in 1795 (as well as the shed and hall mentioned earlier). North, across Hale Street, is the City Hall; westward, within view across Locust Street, are the Public Library and the (old) High School (presently the Junior High School).

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While living in Maine, Johnson did not relinquish his contacts in coastal New Hampshire. In 1804, following a devastating fire in Portsmouth, Johnson was chosen to draw plans for the brick office of the New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company. This building formed the focal point of a curved group of contiguous business structures which, though built by various owners, may also have been designed by Johnson. The insurance office, now the Portsmouth Athenaeum (NR 1973), was long attributed to Charles Bulfinch until the original bills for its construction were discovered in 1949.<sup>7</sup> The Athenaeum remains one of the most significant and least altered commercial buildings in northern New England. During construction of the building, in 1804 and 1805, Johnson is known to have returned to Portsmouth; possibly he designed the Hale House while he was temporarily living a few miles from Dover.

Johnson again returned to live in Portsmouth in 1815 and 1816, probably drawn by the architectural work that resulted from a great fire in that town in December, 1813. Shortly thereafter, he moved to New York City, where he died in 1819.

Although the seacoast area of New Hampshire supported a number of builder-architects during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, none of these men seems to have equalled Johnson's significant influence in the development of the early Federal style in that area. Johnson's work extended to most of the principal towns in the region. He is known to have constructed a wooden store in Dover in 1801, for example, four years before Hale employed him to design the Hale House. Hale's house is, however, the only known dwelling anywhere which is documented as Johnson's design, and as such the house is of great importance as a document in the development of the early Federal style in northern New England.

The Hale house is of further architectural importance in having been raised and finished on the exterior by George Pendexter of Dover and by his brother Edward of neighboring Madbury. Both men were important local craftsmen during the Federal period. In 1829, George Pendexter was the master joiner who executed much of the woodwork of Dover's new First Parish meeting house.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship of the Hale House with other important examples of domestic architecture in the seacoast region of New Hampshire is emphasized by the specification in the building contract that the house be "in every respect equal to and resembling the mansion house of Edward Cutts, Esq., of Portsmouth, excepting that the front portico shall be supported by two pillars, and the window over it a plain cornice and except the railing on the top." The Cutts mansion still survives in Portsmouth in somewhat altered condition, and has long been recognized as one of New Hampshire's important early Federal-style dwellings.<sup>9</sup> The documented connection between the Hale and Cutts houses illustrates the coherence and strength of local tradition in the development of the Federal style in coastal New Hampshire and provides insight into the means by which one important building influenced the design of others.

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Effect of the move: The Hale House was moved about 150 feet in 1890 to provide a site for a new city hall. The original extensive grounds of the property had already been disposed of and subdivided. The principal effect of the move, therefore, was the placement of the building in a less prominent location within the city than it had originally occupied. At the same time, however, the building was not only preserved by the move, but was placed adjacent to another architecturally significant structure, the new St. Thomas' Church (1891-93). This fine Gothic structure, designed by the Boston architect Henry Vaughan (1845-1917), was built of local stone and was inspired by rural English parish churches in the Perpendicular style.<sup>10</sup> The move also necessitated the removal and replacement of the original chimneys of the dwelling.

- 1) James L. Garvin, "Ebenezer Clifford, Architect and Inventor," Old-Time New England, LXV, 3-4 (Winter-Spring, 1975), pp 23-37.
- 2) Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), I, p. 302.
- 3) New Hampshire Gazette, January 2, 1799; The Oracle of the Day, January 5, 1799.
- 4) Garvin, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
- 5) Dwight, op. cit., I, p. 312.
- 6) Ibid., II, p. 154.
- 7) James L. Garvin, "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect," M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969.
- 8) Alonzo H. Quint, The First Parish in Dover, New Hampshire, Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary, October 28, 1883. (Dover, NH: n.p., 1884), p. 74.
- 9) John Mead Howells, The Architectural Heritage of the Piscataqua (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1937; reprinted 1965), pp. 145-147.
- 10) William D. Morgan, "Henry Vaughan: An English Architect in New Hampshire," Historical New Hampshire, XXVII, 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 130-132.

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CONTINUATION SHEET MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Garvin, James L. "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect" M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969.

-----, "Ebenezer Clifford, Architect and Inventor," Old-Time New England, LXV, 3-4 (Winter-Spring, 1975), pp. 23-37.

Grimes, Gordon F. "A History of Dover, New Hampshire, 1790-1835" 2 vols. Honors paper, Department of History, Bowdoin College, 1971.

"  
McDaniel, Florence (see note below)

Morgan, William D., "Henry Vaughan: An English Architect in New Hampshire," Historical New Hampshire, XXVII, 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 120-140.

Quint, Alonzo H. The First Parish in Dover, New Hampshire, Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary, October 28, 1883. Dover, NH: n.p., 1884.

Scales, John. History of Dover, New Hampshire. Dover, NH: printed by authority of the city council, 1923.

-----, History of Strafford County, New Hampshire, and Representative Citizens. Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Company, 1914.

Tolles, Bryant F., Jr., with Carolyn K. Tolles. New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide. Hanover, NH: published for the New Hampshire Historical Society by the University Press of New England, 1979.

Wadleigh, George. Notable Events in the History of Dover, New Hampshire. Dover, NH: the author, 1913.

Bibliographical note: In November 1954 Mrs. Florence McDaniel read a paper on the William Hale House and Lafayette's visit to Dover in 1825 at a meeting of the Northam Colonists Historical Society. Her account was based on a day-by-day record that William Hale had kept of the building of his house, and on two letters to Sarah Low, who in 1895 had obtained an account of the events that took place during Lafayette's visit from Mrs. Louisa Downs, Hale's housekeeper in 1825. These papers had recently been discovered by the Messes Frost, two of Hale's great-granddaughters, in the attic of their house on Locust Street in Dover. Abstracts of Mrs. McDaniel's paper were subsequently published in Foster's Daily Democrat, on or around 18 November 1954 (the dates of the clippings, which are in the files of St. Thomas' Church, are unclear). These published abstracts have supplied much of the information included in these nomination papers. A thorough search of the Northam Colonists' files has failed to turn up the original paper, though the minutes of their meetings confirm that such a paper was presented. The current whereabouts of William Hale's account book for the construction of the house is also unknown.