

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

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received DEC 27 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 MERRIMACK COUNTY BANK (OLD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING)

and/or common FRANKLIN PIERCE LAW OFFICE BUILDING: (since 1952) Christian Mutual Life Insurance Building

2. Location

street & number 214 North Main Street ___ not for publicationcity, town Concord ___ vicinity of congressional district Secondstate New Hampshire code 33 county Merrimack code 013

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell ✓

street & number 214 North Main Street

city, town Concord ___ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Merrimack County Registry of Deeds
Merrimack County Courthouse

street & number North Main Street

city, town Concord ___ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes nodate 1964 federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of Interior

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state DC

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The building, located at 214 North Main Street, occupies a site of three-quarters of an acre in size on the easterly side of the street. The site is located between Ferry Street and Steam Mill Court and is adjacent to the main printing and binding plant of the Rumford Press.

Constructed in 1826 to house the Merrimack County Bank, the building at 214 North Main Street has changed little in exterior appearance. The three story, brick, Federal-style commercial structure with step gables now has a single front door where once were double doors. The interior, however, underwent major change during the tenure of the New Hampshire Historical Society (1840-1952). In the early 1900's, portions of the second floor were removed to create a high ceiling interior display area for the Society. Tie rods were run through the building to compensate for strength lost in removing the floor. Securing the tie rods to exterior walls led to the placement of X-shaped metal anchor plates across the facades.

In 1921, the interior of the building was extensively remodeled by the Boston architect Guy Lowell in the colonial revival style, to serve as a museum for the Society. The portico was also added then.

After purchase in 1952 by the Christian Mutual Life Insurance Company, the interior decoration was restored and refurnished in authentic Federal period colors, fabrics and woodworking treatment by the firm of Dan Cooper of New York City.

(See Continuation Sheet 1A)

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1A

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DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The general character of the building is typical of the late Federal style in New England. Overall dimensions of the building are 50 feet wide by 32 feet deep.

Prominent exterior features include: a series of attenuated blind arches inset 4 inches which mark off five bays across the facade; at either end of the building a four-step gable culminating in a chimney capped with simple moulding; a symmetrically positioned entrance portico (added in 1921 by Guy Lowell) which consists of two Ionic columns paired with two Ionic pilasters supporting a two-step architrave, plain frieze, and dentilled and modillioned cornice, with low iron railing above; a recessed and panelled front door embrasure with horizontal fanlight above the door defined by leaded muntins in ovoid patterns; and a single six-panel front door. A heavy wood cornice, painted white, runs along the front and rear faces of the building. Windows are six-over-six double hung wood sash, with window frames recessed 1 inch from the exterior wall surface. The windows on the front of the building are completed by one piece stone lintels and stone sills; the windows placed in the end and rear walls lack lintels and sills. A stone (granite) ashlar foundation supports the old portion of the building; no foundation is visible beneath the rear ell. The roof over the main building is pitched at a low angle, covered with slate shingles and copper sheathing over the ridge. The roof over the ell is flat.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Museum & Library

Specific dates 1826, 1921

Builder/Architect John Leach, Concord; Guy Lowell, Boston

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

An outstanding survivor in "the old North end" of Concord's Main Street, the stately symmetry and graceful proportions of this well-designed brick building make it an architectural treasure. Its Historic American Buildings status is well merited as a particularly fine example of a multi-story Federal-period commercial edifice, all the more remarkable because it was designed and erected by a local contractor.

Originally a structure intended for banking and associated business, this building has housed a wide range of significant activities in the life and culture of the State's capital city. Lawyers occupied offices on the second floor from the beginning. The most famous among them was young Franklin Pierce, later to become a General in the Mexican War, a United States Senator for New Hampshire, and in 1853 the President of the United States.

Literature also had its place in the building, not only as a library of collected works of the New Hampshire Historical Society, but in the creative writing of Dr. Nathaniel Bouton, who had his study in one of the second floor offices. As Pastor of the First Congregational Church beginning in 1824, Dr. Bouton published in 1856 his invaluable "History of Concord, from its First Grant in 1725, to the Organization of the City Government in 1853, with a History of Ancient Penacooke, The Whole Interspersed with Numerous Interesting Incidents and Anecdotes, Down to the Present Period, 1855; Embellished with Maps; with Portraits of Distinguished Citizens, and Views of Ancient and Modern Residences. 'This shall be written for the generations to come,'" was Dr. Bouton's purpose as stated on the lengthy title page. Bouton's History remains the premier reference work for Concord-area history.

The early history of the building at 214 North Main Street is presented in "A Capital for New Hampshire," a three volume compilation by Grace Page Amsden, on file at the NH Historical Society. In Chapter XXXIII, "Concord: 1825-1930," she records:

"Heretofore, except for the State House, there had been no thought given to architectural style in the building enterprise in Concord....When the First Baptist Society prepared to build, John Leach of Dunbarton had just moved to town with aspirations to be an architect, although the first Concord Director (1830) lists him merely as 'carpenter and joiner.'

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3/4 acre

NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Concord

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

A

1	9	2	9	3	7	6	2	4	7	8	7	2	2	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

City of Concord Tax Assessor's Records:
Map #55, Block #5, Lot #5

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 Mrs. Robertson Page, Chairman, Special Projects Committee

organization Woman's Club of Concord date March 10, 1977

street & number 6 Cambridge Street telephone 603-224-0862

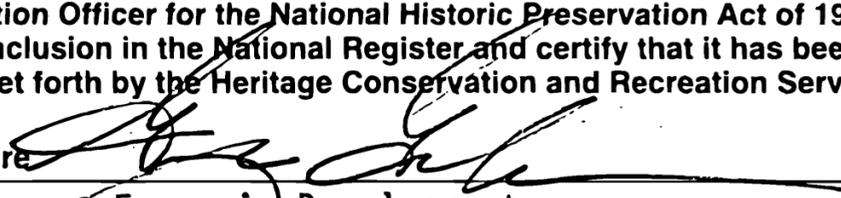
city or town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

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.

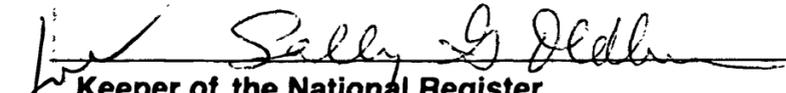
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

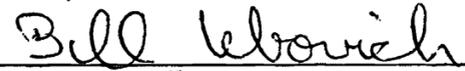
Commissioner, Dept. Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date October 4, 1977

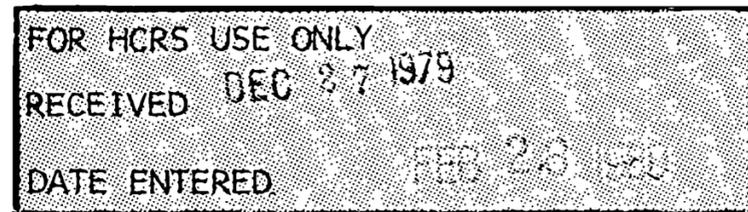
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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 2/28/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date Feb 26, 1980

Chief of Registration



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

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PAGE 2

SIGNIFICANCE:

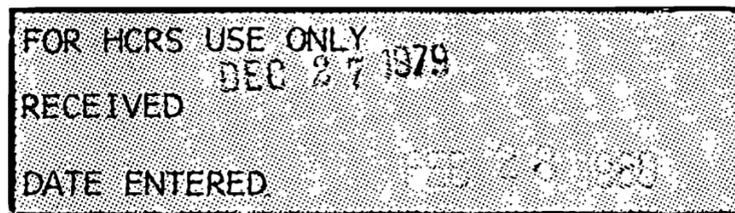
"Leach found his first opportunity in building this new church. Concord has later examples of his creative ability: The building at 214 North Mainstreet, built in 1826 for the Merrimack County Bank -- a fine building which went far to solace the North End for its failure to locate the State House

"...The most notable progress of the period was the erection of two important brick blocks in 1826. When its charter expired, the Upper Bank officials obtained a new one under the name of Merrimack County Bank. The old Livermore house was no longer adequate as quarters and so John Leach was commissioned to design the building already referred to. It is a three story brick block built on the lot next south of the site of the Livermore house, planned to afford quarters for two banks on the ground floor and office rooms on the second floor. The top floor was planned for a public hall and later it was used by the New Hampshire Historical Society (1840). The completed structure was 'the pride of the North End' to quote Asa McFarland, Jr. again.

"Until recent years the building had two entrances, the north one opening into the Merrimack County Bank. The south door opened into the drugstore of Dr. Samuel Morrill until the NH Savings Bank began business there in 1830. The second floor offices were occupied by various lawyers -- among them being young Franklin Pierce. Sometimes public officials occupied these quarters. Dr. Bouton used one of the rooms as a study when he was writing his history of Concord. In later years, this handsome old building was purchased by the New Hampshire Historical Society for use as a museum..."

The tenure of the Historical Society began in 1840 -- when the third story used as a public hall was adapted for use as a library -- and extended for 112 years. In 1869, the Historical Society purchased the building, and used it as a museum and library until the library was removed to the Society's new building on Park Street in 1912; but 214 North Main Street retained its museum function until 1952.

Especially unusual has been the combination of religious significance related to commerce and social-humanitarian needs that have focused at "the Old Building" since 1952 when it was acquired by the Christian Mutual Life Insurance Company.



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SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The President's Annual Report for 1975 expresses full appreciation of 214 North Main Street in an eloquent tribute, opposite the title page that shows a line drawing of the building. Dr. Schurman wrote as follows:

"OUR HOME OFFICE

"The charming stately building at the right, the Home Office of the Christian Mutual Life Insurance Company, once served as the private law offices of Franklin Pierce, 14th President of the United States.

"Steeped in tradition, this beautiful and graceful brick edifice has over the years received many honors for its fine architecture and historical significance.

"So soundly built in 1826, so thoroughly restored in 1912 and tastefully redecored on several subsequent occasions, today's visitors would believe it the product of modern architecture except for the patina of age on its exterior walls.

"The entrance reception area is two stories high with second balcony offices overlooking it from charming French windows. On one wall hangs a beautiful antique clock crafted in England for the first New Hampshire Legislature. All woodwork, including the floors, are hand-rubbed. Most of the window glass is 1826 vintage. Christian doors mark the entrances to two private offices adorned by fireplaces outlined in Dutch tile and made only as 19th century craftsmen could make them.

"Truly this is a most appropriate building for a Company serving the Saviour and the Saved since 1885."

Phenomenal success and growth of the Christian Mutual Life Insurance Company have necessitated a removal to larger quarters in a new building on the other side of the Merrimack River. State law does not permit the Company to own more than one building. So the building was subsequently sold to the law firm of Gallagher, Callahan, and Gartrell.

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SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

For a century and a half, 214 North Main Street has been an intrinsic part of the history and the architecture of the Capital City.

In 1928, the historian Elwin L. Page wrote in "Abraham Lincoln in New Hampshire": "Could we be set back to 1860, with no pictures in mind other than the actualities of today, and travel the route of Lincoln up Main Street, we should not recognize, except for the then-new Saint Paul's Church, now somewhat enlarged and changed, a single public building. The State House and the Court House are altered beyond recognition. If you went up Main Street on March 1, 1860, with your only dream picture an inverted memory of the aspect of 1928, you might with difficulty recognize a small portion of the business buildings lining the east side of the street....Everything else would be utterly strange. From the Court House knoll you might view the scene with a sense of greater familiarity. Up the street you could glimpse the battlemented end of the old Historical Society Building, while over across would be the solid bulks of the McFarland house and of the Sanborn house, where a few months after Lincoln unseeingly saw it, Stephen A. Douglas was to sleep..."¹ Note: (Both of the houses mentioned have since been destroyed.)

The Franklin Pierce law office building is the only building of its kind north of the Concord business district to carry forward the once proud tradition of early 19th century architecture. Surrounded by new structures of dubious quality, by pizza shacks and gas filling stations with glaring signs, a once stately, attractive area of Main Street has disappeared and "the Old Building" is a rarity.

The name of Franklin Pierce also enhances interest in 214 North Main Street. Visitors to the Pierce Manse ask to see his law office building, too. With an increasing historical appreciation of Franklin Pierce as 14th President during bitterly controversial times and with sagacity and determination to avoid open conflict, the Pierce Brigade as a volunteer group hopes to coordinate preservation of the three buildings in Concord with which President Pierce was associated.

Distinctive in its own right, the Franklin Pierce Law Office Building at 214 North Main Street causes much admiration. Visitors and citizens of New Hampshire alike express enthusiasm over the handsome lines and charm of this building. Admired for many generations, when it was built and even more 150 years later, this building has an aura of the life and times of "old Concord" to be preserved for the future.

¹Page, Elwin Lawrence, "Abraham Lincoln in New Hampshire," 1929, Houghton Mifflin Co.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Amsden, Grace Page, "A Capital for New Hampshire," Ms. 3 vol. located New Hampshire Historical Society, 1950.

Historical New Hampshire, Vol. XXII, No. 3, Autumn, 1967.

Interviews with Linda Wilson, Director, NH State Historic Preservation Office; John F. Page, Director, NH Historical Society; Douglas Woodward, Asst. Director, Concord City Planning Board; Dr. Wesley J. Schurman, President, Christian Mutual Life Insurance Co; Mrs. George Wallace, Chr., NH Heritage Comm., NH Fed. of Woman's Clubs.