

140211042

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 30 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1975

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

Waterville Opera House + City Hall

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Castonguay Square

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st Hon. David Emery

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Kennebec

CODE

011

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

___ PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Waterville

STREET & NUMBER

Castonguay Square

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kennebec County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

State Street

CITY, TOWN

Augusta

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Waterville Opera House is a good representative example of the multi-purpose civic buildings erected in Maine at the turn of the century. Designed in the Colonial Revival style by George G. Adams of Lawrence, Mass., the Opera House was constructed between 1897 and 1902.

The Waterville Opera House is a large three story rectangular building with a flat roof. The foundation and basement story are of stone, while the main structure is brick with wood and stone trim.

The facade or south wall of the Opera House is composed of nine bays with a projection of the central three. The central projection of the rough stone basement story contains a recessed entrance staircase flanked on either side by a window. The two sections flanking the central projection each have three windows.

The first story of the central projection is made up of a recessed arched doorway flanked on either side by an arched window with a stone sill. Both the doorway and windows are surrounded by rusticated brickwork. The two sections flanking the central projection each contain three windows which have stone sills and are surrounded by rusticated horizontal brickwork. A stone stringcourse is located between the first and second stories.

The second story of the central projection displays three large arched windows which are enframed by two stone Doric columns and two brick pilasters with stone bases and recessed brick panels. Flanking the central projection at this level are two pairs of three windows with stone sills and lintels as well as decorative stone arches above them. A projecting brick pilaster with a stone base appears at either side of the facade.

Another stone stringcourse separates the second story from the half story containing three small rectangular windows which are flanked on either side by three circular windows. The design of the facade is completed by an elaborate wooden cornice composed of a dentil molding, a series of modillions and an ornamental crest at the center bearing the inscription "City Hall".

While the entrance to city offices is located on the facade, access to the theater is gained from the west side. The rough stone ground story of the west wall is largely covered by a granite staircase with an iron railing. The remaining two and a half stories exhibit a five bay composition with a projection of the central three. The three central bays of the first story each contain an arched doorway surrounded by rusticated brickwork. These doorways are flanked on either side by a window surrounded by rusticated horizontal brickwork. A stone stringcourse divides the first and second stories.

(See continuation sheets)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 30 1975
	JAN 1 1976
DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The second story of the central projection has three arched windows which are enframed by four brick pilasters with stone bases. These windows are flanked on either side by a window with a stone sill and lintel as well as a decorative stone arch above it. A projecting brick pilaster with a stone base appears at either side of the wall.

A second stone stringcourse separates the second story from a half story containing three small rectangular windows which are flanked on either side by a circular window. Above these appears a continuation of the facade cornice.

As a secondary entrance to civic offices, the east wall has a simple design than the facade and west walls. As with the west wall, the rough stone ground story is largely covered by a granite staircase with an iron railing. The first story exhibits the five bay composition of a central arched doorway flanked on either side by a pair of windows. Rusticated brickwork surrounds these features. The first and second stories are divided by a stone stringcourse.

The second story contains two symmetrically placed windows with stone sills and lintels as well as decorative stone arches above them. A projecting brick pilaster with a stone base appears at either side of the wall.

Another stone stringcourse separates the second story from a half story containing two symmetrically placed circular windows. Over these is located a continuation of the facade cornice.

The rear or north wall is not exposed to public view and thus lacks the ornamentation of the other three. It is of plain brick with symmetrical distribution of windows on the ground, first, and second stories.

The interior of the Waterville Opera House is comprised of two major sections. The ground and first stories serve as the headquarters for the local city government. The remaining story and a half houses the community's opera house. Much of this space is devoted to a huge auditorium which has retained its turn-of-the-century appearance. The balcony and proscenium arch are ornamented with elaborate Baroque style plasterwork. Still in sude is the original painted curtain bearing a large scenic landscape.

As the last century ended, the citizens of Waterville created their opera house as a sumbol of civic pride. Three quarters of a
(See continuation sheet)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 30 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

century later, this imposing building remains as a civic and cultural landmark in the center of one of Maine's major industrial cities.

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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1898

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George Adams

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Waterville Opera House is an unusually well preserved turn-of-the-century theatre which continues its original function as a facility used for the theatrical productions both by visiting and local companies as well as for other civic events. It remains as a rare holdover from the pre-motion picture era when nearly every community of any significant size maintained a theatre or "opera house" for live entertainment. Of further interest is the fact that it was built as part of a municipal "complex" housing the city offices in the same structure, a typical late-nineteenth century trend.

The project was initiated in May, 1896, by a petition of 63 citizens to the mayor and aldermen of Waterville. George G. Adams of Lawrence, Mass. was commissioned as architect and a building contract was executed with Kelly Brothers of Haverhill, Mass., in Feb. 1897. Although scheduled for completion on July 1, 1898, the building was not finally finished until early in 1902 partially due to litigation with the architect over fees.

The auditorium part of the building was originally referred to as the "Assembly Rooms" and one of its earliest uses was for a dairyman's exhibition. Touring companies of various kinds also made it a regular stop on their way from Canada or from Boston and New Haven and many amateur shows were produced in the early years.

Artists who appeared at the Opera House included Judith Anderson, Rudy Valle, Marion Anderson and even Tom Mix (his horse having to be hauled up the outside of the building.) President Hoover also delivered an address in the auditorium. Several prominent opera companies and orchestras played the house. There was general decline in interest in live theatre following World War II and the Opera House was used largely for movies.

Since 1960 the theatre has reverted to its original use and each year is the scene of several plays, musicals and recitals. During the last two years it has seen performances of "Ruddigore", "My Fair Lady", "Godspell", "Blithe Spirit", "Pirates of Penzance", "Cosi Fan Tutti", "The Nutcracker Suite", and "I do, I do" as well as barber shop nights, dance recitals and so on. This kind of activity carried on in a 1900 theatre in a relatively small city is extremely unusual in this day and age.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Original documents Ms. by Anthony Betts, M.D., Waterville, 1975

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	9	4	4	9	9	7	5	4	9	3	2	9	0	0
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Architectural Historian
Frank A. Beard, Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE October 1975

STREET & NUMBER 31 Western Avenue TELEPHONE 207-289-2133

CITY OR TOWN Augusta, STATE Maine

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE H. Sawin [Signature] DATE 10/28/75

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
Noting	DATE <u>1/1/96</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>12/31/75</u>
ATTEST: <u>Ronald W. Greenberg</u>	
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	