

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received AUG 9 1983  
date entered SEP 22 1983

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

**1. Name**

historic ALTON BAY RAILROAD STATION

and/or common ALTON BAY COMMUNITY CENTER

**2. Location**

street & number ~~Route~~ <sup>NH</sup> 11 n/a not for publication

city, town Alton n/a vicinity of

state N.H. code 33 county Belknap code 001

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> - N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Community Cen</u>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Alton

street & number Town Hall, Main Street

city, town Alton n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03809

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Belknap County Courthouse/Registry of Deeds

street & number 64 Court Street

city, town Laconia state New Hampshire 03246

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Alton Hist. Resource Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Lakes Region Planning Commission

city, town Meredith state New Hampshire

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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	n/a moved date n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Alton Bay Railroad Station is a former railroad station, now used as a community center, that stands on the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee's Alton Bay. The one and a half story Shingle Style wooden building is set on a narrow strip of land, with the present N.H. Route 11 directly in front of the building and the lake directly behind it. The rectangular building has two porches--a porch on the western street front (formerly the trackside) which is sheltered by the same gable roof with flaring eaves as the station; and an attached shed roofed porch covering the north and east (lakeside) facades. The stone and brick foundation is only visible beneath the attached porch. The walls are sheathed with wooden shingles, and the roof with asphalt shingles. A shallow cornice is found on the rakes of the gables. The western porch has eaves with decoratively sawn exposed rafters and a fascia board, which are continued as a wooden shingled pent completely across the southern gable and across the northern gable from the western corner to the shed roofed porch. Moulded trim surrounds the windows and all but one of the doors.

The main feature of the western (trackside or street front) facade is the porch which has a floor of asphalt paving with an outer granite curb, four large square posts with heavy sawn braces, and a ceiling of narrow boards. The wall behind the porch is different from the other facades of the building in that it has a wainscoating of vertical boards (with a sill board) that is topped by a moulded rail that also serves as the sill for the windows. This wall is divided into two equal sections by a central three-sided projection that once served the station office. A single one over one sash window is found on each face of the projection. The three-bay sections on each side of the projection both have an identical paneled door with window in their central bay. The northern door is flanked on each side by a one over one sash window. The southern door has a similar one over one sash window to its south. But the bay to its north has been covered by a modern bulletin board. The bulletin board hides a diamond paned, horizontal rectangular window which is hinged on the bottom, and can still be seen in the interior. On the western slope of the roof is found a gabled dormer, whose flaring eaves with mouldings and decoratively sawn exposed rafters are continued as a pent across the dormer's gable. The dormer is shingled, with a moulded cornice on the rakes, and two single pane windows which share the same moulded trim. In front of the dormer is the station's semaphore--a wooden post with a metal ladder and two signal arms.

The first story of the south facade features a triple window with one over one sash. To the east of the triple window is a modern paneled door with six-pane window and plain trim (a recent addition). And to the west of the triple window is another one over one sash window. In the gable above the pent are two rectangular sash windows with diamond panes.

The north facade has similar fenestration--a triple window with one over one sash in the first story, and two diamond panel sash windows in the gable. The porch which covers the northern and eastern facades is supported by metal posts and wooden beams beneath it, but the porch proper has square wooden posts with heavy sawn braces, like those of the western porch. The porch has a floor of heavy planks, simple wooden railings with square balusters, eaves with plain exposed rafters and a moulded fascia board, and a beaded board ceiling.

The east (lakeside) facade has, to the north, another triple window with one over one sash, and, to the south, a pair of diamond-paned, horizontal, rectangular windows, which are hinged on the bottom and share the same moulded trim. The eastern slope of the roof is broken only by a tall brick chimney with a corbeled cap.

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Continuation sheet #1 - DESCRIPTION

Item number 7

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The building's exterior is virtually unchanged. Although the lakeside porch was not constructed with the rest of the building in 1907, it was added by the railroad. The only known exterior alterations since the cessation of railroad service are the addition of the modern door on the south facade and the bulletin board on the west facade.

The interior has been more extensively altered to accommodate the building's new function as a community center, although many interior details still survive. The waiting room, the station office, and a section of a storage room were combined into one large room that now occupies the northern three fifths of the building. The room still retains most of the original walls and ceilings of beaded boarding, the moulded window and door trim, and the moulded cornices. The southeastern section of the building is now occupied by a large L-shaped kitchen which incorporates the rest of that storage room and most of the baggage room. Some of the walls still have the horizontal boards of the baggage room, but the rest are plastered. The ceiling has sections of narrow beaded boarding and wider plain boards, marking the former rooms. The kitchen, like the main room, now has a linoleum tile floor. In the southeastern corner is the enclosed stairway to the full basement. (The basement, with a concrete floor and unfinished walls of stone and brick, is used for storage and the furnace. It is lit by small windows beneath the lakeside porch, and has a paneled door, which opens into the area beneath the porch.) The rest of the baggage room in the southwestern corner of the building is set off as a small office, used as a tourist information booth in the summer. Between this small office and the main northern room is a passageway, off which are the building's two restrooms. The passageway and restrooms are the best preserved interiors, still retaining their original plans, vertical beaded boarding walls with baseboards, paneled doors, moulded trim and cornices, and beaded board ceilings.

Curbed sidewalks are found along Route 11, the south side of the building, and the lakeshore south of the lakeside porch. The narrow strip of land between the street and the lake to the north is grassed with a few trees. Along the lakeshore to the south of the station is a stone retaining wall. A small lawn corbed by granite and a driveway-parking space for delivery vehicles are also found on the southern side of the building.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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			

<b>Specific dates</b>	1907	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Lewis Killam, Contractor
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Alton Bay Railroad Station is significant in the area of transportation as an interesting, well preserved early 20th century railroad station, and in the area of architecture as a rare Shingle Style railroad station.

Transportation: The Cochecho Railroad, chartered in 1847 to build a railroad from Dover to the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad, could only raise the funds to construct the line as far as the southern tip of Alton Bay, the southeasternmost bay of Lake Winnepesaukee. But, the railroad company was able to extend its service by building a steamboat, which operated on the lake during the warmer months. In fact, the steamboat made its first run in the same month that regular train service to Alton Bay began--August, 1851. The railroad station on the shore of Alton Bay thus became an important transfer point for tourists who took the railroad to the lake and then boarded the steamboat for the trip to their lakeside hotel or cottage. Alton Bay itself became a major destination, after a lakeside resort village grew up near the railroad station.

The Cochecho Railroad, in financial trouble by the early 1860's, was taken over by a new corporation, the Dover & Winnepesaukee Railroad, in 1863. Within a few months, the Dover & Winnepesaukee Railroad leased its property to the Boston & Maine Railroad, which in 1892 purchased the line. After the completion of the Lake Shore Railroad along the south shore of Lake Winnepesaukee from Alton Bay to Lakeport in 1890, the Alton Bay Railroad Station ceased to be the terminal depot of the line, but it remained the major transfer point from the railroad to the Boston & Maine's steamboat, the famous "Mount Washington".

The present structure is actually the third railroad station built at Alton Bay. The first burned a few years after the Cochecho Railroad opened. The second station also burned, when a drunken arsonist set fire to three Alton buildings, on the night of November 3-4, 1906. One building, a box factory, was saved, but the other two, a saw-grist mill and the Alton Bay Railroad Station, with its adjoining steamboat wharf, were completely destroyed. The replacement of the railroad station and the wharf was delayed for a few months, as the Boston & Maine Railroad considered alternate sites for the facilities. After receiving the petitions of the local residents, the railroad company decided to build the new station and wharf near the old site. Work began first on the wharf, which was completed in June, 1907, in time for the beginning of the summer steamboat service.

On June 7, 1907, the president of the Boston & Maine Railroad signed a contract with builder Lewis Killam of Haverhill, Mass., to erect, for the sum of \$6,806., a new passenger station and freight house at Alton Bay. The contract called for the completion of the two new buildings by August 1. And work soon began. The Farmington News could report by June 14, that "The foundation for the new depot ... is being laid",<sup>1</sup> and, by July 12, that "The frame for the new depot at Alton Bay is being enclosed."<sup>2</sup> In early August, a Laconia paper announced that "The passenger station is finished outside ..."<sup>3</sup> But, the

<sup>1</sup>Farmington News, June 14, 1907.

<sup>2</sup>Farmington News, July 12, 1907.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .193

Quadrangle name Alton, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A	<u>119</u>	<u>3189710</u>	<u>481561010</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
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D			
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
state	n/a	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	David L. Ruell		
organization	Lakes Region Planning Commission	date	April 17, 1983
street & number	Main Street	telephone	279-8171
city or town	Meredith	state	New Hampshire 03253

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

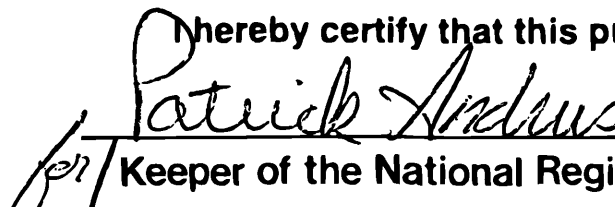
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
 title NH State Historic Preservation Office date JUL 29 1983

### For NPS use only

Whereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 9/22/83  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet #2 - SIGNIFICANCE

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contractor was not able to meet the deadline, the Farmington paper noting that the "work ... has been delayed by lack of finishing material."<sup>4</sup> The station was "nearly completed"<sup>5</sup> in early September, but not finished and opened to the public until November.

The building was used as a passenger station from November, 1907 until July 1935, when train service to Alton Bay ended. Apparently, the only major change made to the station during these years was the addition of the shed-roofed lakeside porch, which does not appear in the very earliest photographs of the building. In 1937, the Boston & Maine Railroad sold its Alton Bay property to the Town of Alton. For some years, the Town leased the station, but, in 1957, it was voted to use the building for a community center. The station was subsequently remodeled to better serve its new role. The exterior, fortunately, has seen only a few changes--an additional door and a new bulletin board. The interior has been more extensively altered, as rooms were combined or divided to provide a larger public hall, a kitchen and a small office. Much of the interior detail, however, survives unchanged.<sup>6</sup> The Alton Bay Railroad Station is still a good example of the railroad station of its period. It appears today much as it did when built--a fine reminder of an era when the railroad and the steamboat were still the primary means of transportation in the Lakes Region.

For nearly twenty-eight years, the last Alton Bay Railroad Station was an important link in the region's transportation system. It served not only as the station for the resort community of Alton Bay and the immediate surrounding area, but also as a major transfer point from the railroad to the steamboats of New Hampshire's largest lake. Other lakes in the state, notably the Squam Lakes, had well developed steamboat lines, but only on Winnepesaukee, was the steamboat service fully integrated into the railroad system, the major transportation system of the 19th and early 20th centuries. At Alton Bay, the Weirs, and Wolfeboro, the traveler need only walk a few steps from the railroad station to the wharf and board a steamboat for the voyage to a lakeside resort. Few buildings associated with that integrated railroad-steamboat service survive today. The Alton Bay Railroad Station, perhaps the most notable of those surviving structures, endures as evidence of a unique segment of the early 20th New Hampshire transportation system.

<sup>3</sup>Laconia News & Critic, August 7, 1907.

<sup>4</sup>Farmington News, August 9, 1907.

<sup>5</sup>Farmington News, September 5, 1907.

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that the surroundings of the railroad station have also changed. A new state highway, Route 11, was constructed on the line of the old railroad track, directly in front of the building. Most of the former railroad yard has been put to other uses--building sites and parking lots. Consequently, the nominated property has been limited to the railroad station and its immediate surroundings.

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Continuation sheet #3 - SIGNIFICANCE

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Architecture: Although the contract and the specifications for the Alton Bay Railroad Station still survive in the records of the Boston & Maine Railroad, the plans and other information on the design of the building do not. We cannot now identify the station's architect. We can say that his choice of the Shingle Style was unusual. The shingled walls, the gable end pents, the roof covering not only the building, but also the track-side porch, are all typical of the style. What is uncommon was its use for a railroad station. The Shingly Style was used primarily for residences. Save for resort buildings, the style seems to have been considered too informal for commercial architecture. Virtually all railroad stations were built with the more common sheathings--clapboard, board and batten, brick and stone. A recent survey of Boston & Maine Railroad stations, for example, included only two other stations in the same style. These stations, in Franklin, N.H., and Wells Beach, Me., are so similar to the Alton Bay station that they may well be the work of the same designer. Both had shingled walls with gable end pents, a rectangular plan with a trackside porch sheltered by the same broad roof as the building. The gable roofed Franklin station (no longer standing) was the closest to the Alton Bay station, although distinguished from it by a Palladian window in the gable and two eyebrow dormers in place of Alton Bay's gabled dormer. The still extant Wells Beach station has a gambrel roof and semi-elliptical windows in the gables. These three stations, however, were the exceptions to the general rule. Although no complete survey of New Hampshire railroad stations has been made, it is safe to say that the Alton Bay Railroad Station is a rare, perhaps the only, Shingly Style railroad station, surviving in the state today. Certainly, this unique building, with its attractive, well preserved exterior, deserves recognition for its uncommon architecture.



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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Continuation sheet #4 - REFERENCES Item number 9 Page 1

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF ALTON, for the years ending, January 31, 1937, January 31, 1938, January 31, 1940, January 31, 1941, December 31, 1949, December 31, 1956, December 31, 1957, December 31, 1958, December 31, 1961.

Mark Beauregard, R.R. STATIONS OF NEW ENGLAND TODAY, Vol. I, THE BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD (Flanders, N.J., 1979).

Farmington News - November 9 & 23, December 7, 14 & 28, 1906; January 11, March 29, April 5, May 3, 10 & 24, June 7, 14 & 21, July 12, August 2, 9 & 30, September 5, November 15, 1907.

Batton McLain Griffin, THE HISTORY OF ALTON (Somersworth, N.H., 1956).

Warren H. Hay - "The Cochecho Railroad" - B & M BULLETIN (Summer, 1977) Vol. VI, No. 4, pp. 6-14.

Laconia Democrat - November 9 & 16, 1906; January 25, March 8, May 3 & 17, June 28, November 15, 1907.

Laconia News & Critic - November 7, 14 & 21, December 12, 1906; January 2 & 9, March 6, 13 & 27, April 17 & 24, May 1 & 8, June 12, 19 & 26, July 3 & 10, August 7, September 4, 1907.

"Memorandum of Agreement, June 7th, 1907, between Lewis Killam and the Boston and Maine Railroad" with attached "Specification for Passenger Station and Freight House at Alton Bay, N.H., Boston & Maine RR, Western Division" (manuscript - Boston & Maine Corporation, Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, Mass.).

Interview - Gladys Howe, Alton, March 22, 1983.



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Continuation sheet #5 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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Verbal boundary description & justification:

The nominated property is bounded on the east by the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee, on the west by the eastern curb of N.H. Route 11, and on the north and south by arbitrary lines parallel to, and forty feet away from, the sides of the railroad station. The nominated property is a small section of what was a much larger railroad yard. However, the former railroad property has been divided by the state highway, Route 11, and largely converted to other uses--newer buildings and parking lots. As the character of most of the former railroad property has been completely changed, the nominated property was limited to the Railroad Station, and its immediate visual surroundings. (Alton Property Map 34, Lot 36). This boundary is indicated by heavy dashed lines on the attached sketch map.

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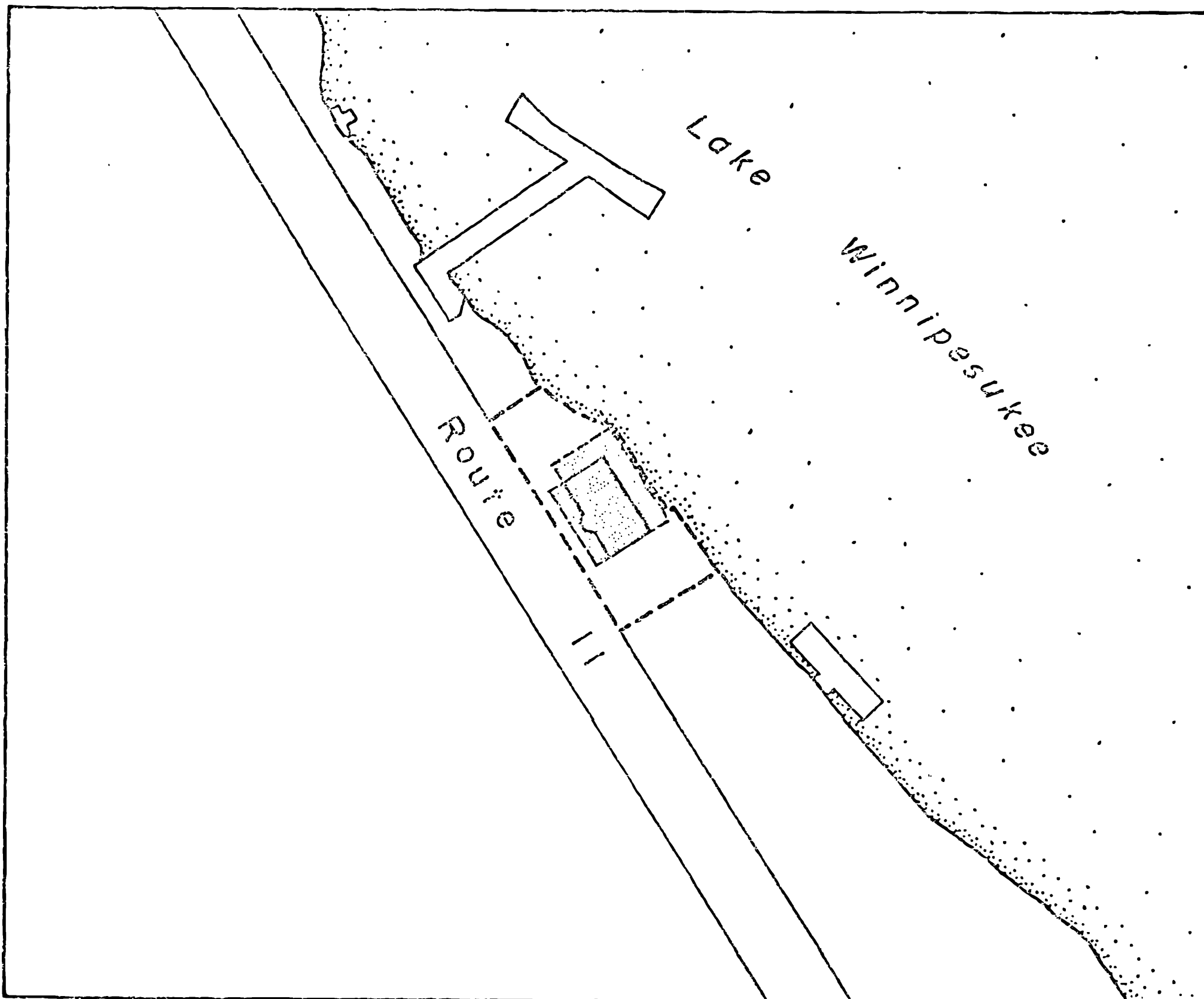
received

date entered

Continuation sheet #6 - SKETCH MAP

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Alton Bay Railroad Station  
Alton, N.H.

