

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

For NPS use only

received OCT 11 1984

date entered NOV 8 1984

**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 Somerset County Courthouse

and or common

2. Location

street & number Court Street N/A not for publication

city, town Skowhegan, N/A vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county Somerset code 025

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Somerset County Commissioners

street & number Court and High Streets

city, town Skowhegan, _____ vicinity of state Maine 04976

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Skowhegan, state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Me. Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maine Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Augusta, state Maine

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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 Somerset County Courthouse is a large rectangular structure constructed of brick with stone trim. Standing three stories high, the main section (1873) is in the Italianate style and features round arched and segmental arched window caps, brick corbelling and a wood cornice supported on brackets. The standing seam metal roof is hipped and originally included a cupola (removed in 1904). The main entrance to the building is on the narrow west facade where there is a pedimented pavillion and a one-story portico. This latter feature is supported on chamfered granite posts and includes a cornice with brackets and a shallow pediment reflecting the design of the roof above.

A 1904 addition consists of an extension by two bays on the east end of the building. For this section the original design was repeated on the exterior. The interior, however, was remodelled throughout the courthouse. This woodwork is still largely intact. In 1938 a two-story west wing continued the Italianate motifs of the 1873 building, although it has a flat roof and stone trim was not used.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1873, 1904 **Builder/Architect** Charles F. Douglas, John Calvin Stevens

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Though obviously an architecturally distinguished building, the work of two outstanding architects, the Somerset County Courthouse has, as well, an interesting political history.

Charles F. Douglas, whose short meteoric career is recounted in the National Register nomination for his own house in Norridgewock (12-18-78), designed the original structure in 1873. The business of the county outgrew the building by the end of the century and the courthouse was enlarged and remodelled in 1904 with great sensitivity to Douglas' design by John Calvin Stevens, indisputably Maine's most famous architect.

On March 1, 1909, the northern part of the Kennebec County was incorporated under the name of Somerset County with Norridgewock as the shire town. A later act of 1872 changed the county seat to Skowhegan provided that town would provide a suitable place for holding court within a very short time or the act would be void. Skowhegan immediately prepared temporary space, but the County Commissioners declared it unsatisfactory, there being great division of opinion between Norridgewock and Skowhegan.

Much litigation ensued which was only settled when ex-Governor Abner Coburn of Skowhegan, perhaps the wealthiest man in the state, offered to pay for a large formal courthouse at the latter place, an offer the county as a whole could not refuse.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coburn, Louise H., Skowhegan on the Kennebec. Portland, 1941.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property $\frac{1}{4}$

Quadrangle name Skowhegan

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	19	4	4	13	0	17	5	4	19	5	17	0	14	10
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

Assessor's Map 1, Lot 12

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 Frank A. Beard, Historian/Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1984

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

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 [Signature]

title S.H.P.O. date 10/1/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 11-8-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration