

PA0009511

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-1-18-0004	DATE 1/12/70

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Pownalborough Court House

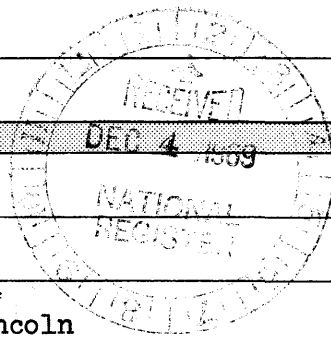
AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Cedar Grove Road

CITY OR TOWN:  
Dresden

STATE: Maine      CODE: 18      COUNTY: Lincoln      CODE: 015



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	seasonal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
The Lincoln County Cultural and Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Federal Street

CITY OR TOWN: Wiscasset      STATE: Maine      CODE: 18

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Lincoln County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Wiscasset      STATE: Maine      CODE: 18

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1933-1965       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: D. C.      CODE: 08

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine  
COUNTY: Lincoln  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Plymouth Company Proprietors on April 13th, 1761, voted to build, within the parade of Fort Shirley, a house forty-five feet long and forty-four feet wide and three stories high, and that one room on the second story forty-five feet long and twenty feet wide be fitted with boxes and benches needful for holding courts.

Completion of the building was delayed for a number of years, and by 1766 only six of the eventual twelve rooms had been partitioned off. The second floor court headquarters was not fitted with boxes as directed. The proposed one main court room was divided into two rooms.

The first floor contained a tavern and family residences. The third floor also contained living quarters. The building has twelve rooms in the main section all approximately 18' x 18' in size. There are four rooms on each floor with two rooms found on either side of a central hall. Each room was heated by a fireplace connected to one of the two large main chimneys. Two of the first floor fireplaces are particularly large.

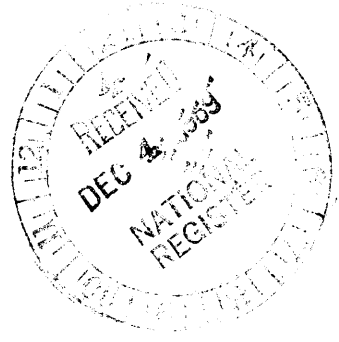
The courthouse had changed little by 1885. Laths and plaster had been added but to this day no electrical fixtures or furnaces have been installed. The plaster and supporting laths were stripped from the walls after the house was purchased by the Lincoln County Cultural and Historical Association.

The frame building is presently clapboarded although it was once shingled. It has a five bay front, a one story side ell, hip roof, as well as two large chimneys.

Almost all of the boards used in the Courthouse construction are 18"-20" wide. A few yards from the house is an old carriage house which is considered to be in fair condition. A large barn located 80 yards to the southeast of the house was razed a few years ago.

Within the building at this time are displays of early area maps, important court papers, early furniture, paintings and photographs of former Courthouse dwellers, as well as weaving looms and a large working model of an early Maine ice house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

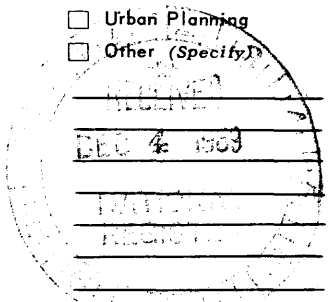
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Built in 1760 - Used from 1760-1794 as a courthouse**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                             |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |  |   |  |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When Lincoln County was established in 1760 setting it aside from York County, it became necessary to build a courthouse for the administration of justice in the area. Lincoln County, named for Governor Pownall's native Lincolnshire England, included all of the province east of the Kennebec River and extended for several miles west of the river. Pownalborough was designated its shire town. Pownalborough at that time included present day Alna, Dresden, Swan Island and Wiscasset.

Work commenced in mid 1761 on the three story 45' x 44' courthouse. Built on the grounds of Fort Shirley, one of the Fort's blockhouses was to be used as a jail and the jailkeeper was to be housed in the barracks. Built in 1752, Fort Shirley was garrisoned for several years and patrols were sent out when hostile Indians were active. Its importance declined when Fort Western, built in Present day Augusta was erected by the Plymouth Company in 1754, and Fort Halifax was built by the government in what is now called Winslow that same year.

Gersham Flagg, himself a proprietor and builder of Fort Western for the Plymouth Company in 1754 was engaged to build the house. Flagg's carpenters arrived from Boston on July 18, 1761 and set to work to frame the court house. Although it was not nearly completed at the time the first court session was held there in September 1761.

The first great chimney with its six fireplaces was built before the end of the year and Flagg's crew returned to Boston early in January. The north chimney was not added until 1769 and part of the court house remained unfinished until then.

While the court house was under construction a jail was built at the northwest corner of the fort. Constructed of timbers 12 inches thick, it measured sixteen feet by thirty six feet and was completed in time to be accepted as County Jail at the September term of court.

Pownalborough court house is the only existing court building in Maine built prior to the Revolution. The house also served as Company House, meeting house, dwelling, tavern and post office.

In 1761 courthouses as we know them today, did not exist in the Province of Maine. It was customary to hold court in town houses, meeting houses, taverns and private dwellings and this was to continue for several years after the Revolution. Major Samuel Goodwin, a Proprietor and Commander of Fort Shirley, was agent and attorney for the Plymouth Company at Frankfort. When the court house was built, he and his family were its first occupants and his descendants continued to occupy it until the 1930's.

The Plymouth Company was responsible for bringing a number of distinguished men of that day to Pownalborough. The proprietors themselves included such names as Bowdoin, Brattle, Gardiner, Hallowell, Hancock, Tufts, Winslow and Vassall.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newspaper article, Lincoln County News, May 8, 1958  
 Newspaper article, Portland Press Herald, July 1, 1960  
 ✓ Stone, Eleanor, Newspaper article, Lewiston Maine Journal  
 Shields, Rose, newspaper article, Kennebec Journal, Augusta, Maine, July 24, 1963  
 Witham, Mrs. Gerald, Newspaper article, Kennebec Journal, Augusta, Maine May 28, 1952  
 ✓ Booklet published by the Lincoln County Cultural & Historical Association  
 Massachusetts Bar Association, Accounts of Early Maine History

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		44° 6' 21"	69° 46' 7"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **56 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**John W. Briggs, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **State Park & Recreation Commission** DATE: **Dec. 1, 1969**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State House**

CITY OR TOWN: **Augusta** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **18**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Lawrence Stuart  
**Lawrence Stuart**  
 Title Director

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Ernest Allen Curwally  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **JAN 12 1970**

ATTEST:  
William J. Smutge  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **DEC 31 1969**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS  
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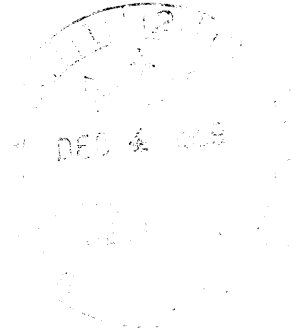
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

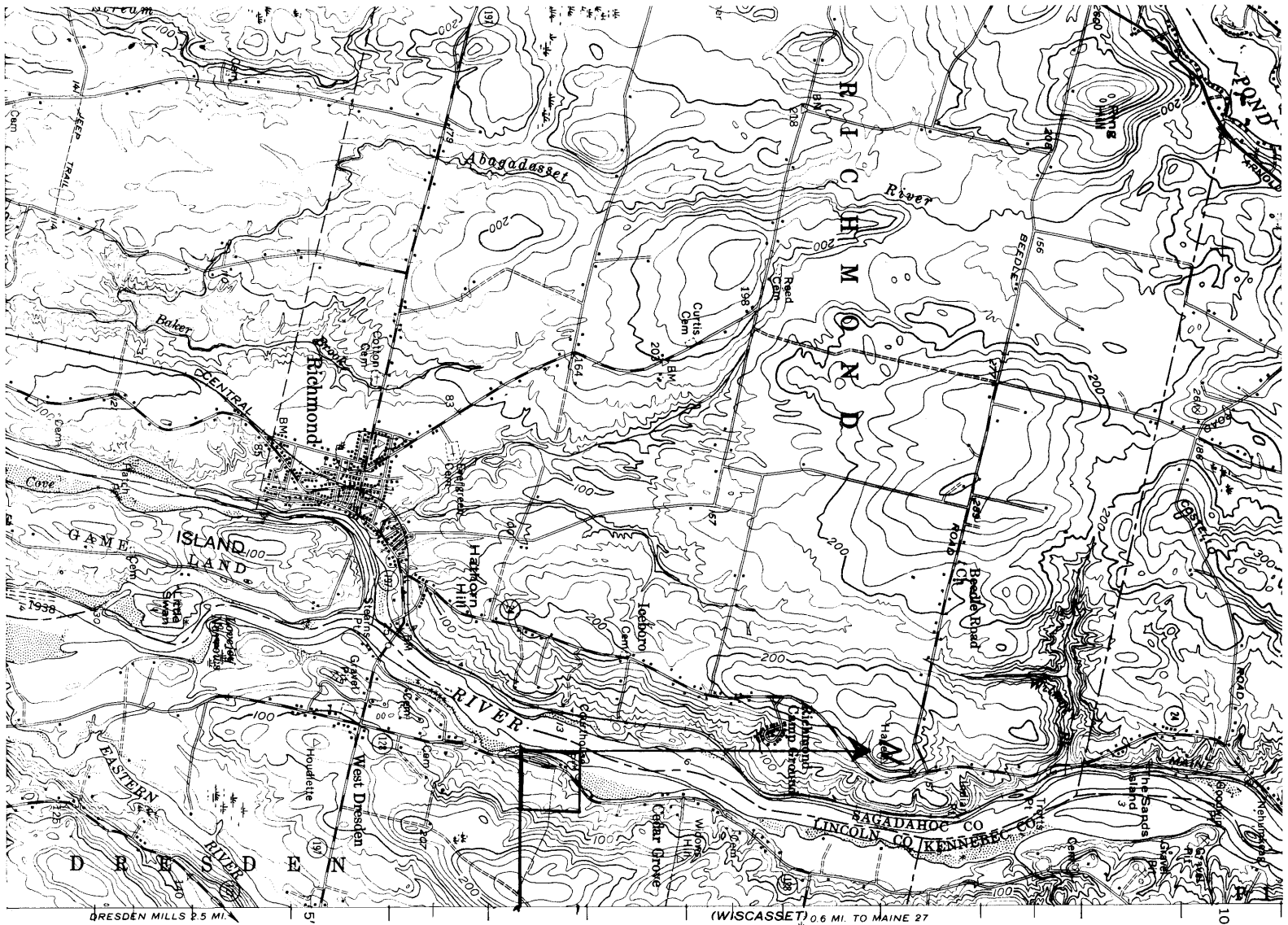
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE		Maine
COUNTY		Lincoln
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
70-118- <del>0028</del> 0004	1/12/70	

(Number all entries) Continuation of Statement of Significance

John Adams was attorney for the Company for many years and appeared in court at Pownalborough. William Cushing, an attorney at Pownalborough and brother of Charles Cushing, Lincoln County's first Sheriff, was appointed to the United States Supreme Court by President George Washington and administered the oath of office to Washington when he was inaugurated for his second term. Jonathan Bowman, whose beautiful house was built at the same time as the court house and still stands a short distance away was Judge of Probate 1772-1804. Reverend Jacob Bailey, born in Massachusetts and ordained in the Church of England, was sent to Pownalborough as a missionary by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He built an episcopal church near the court house where its site is now marked by a plaque. John Adams, Jacob Bailey, Jonathan Bowman and Charles Cushing were classmates at Harvard College in the class of 1755. The Lincoln County Cultural and Historical Association bought the court house in 1954 from members of the Canby family, who were direct descendants of Major Samuel Goodwin.





**Pownalborough Court House 56 Acres**

**Latitude**

**Longitude**

NW	44°	6'	29"
NE	44°	6'	29"
SE	44°	6'	00"
SW	44°	6'	00"

69°	46'	16"
69°	45'	50"
69°	45'	50"
69°	46'	16"

**GARDINER, MAINE**  
N4400—W6945/15  
1957