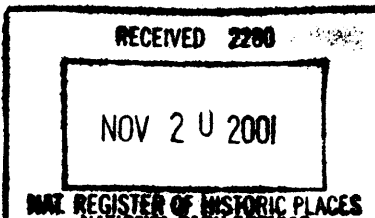


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1419

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name (Former) Union Town House

other names/site number The Old Town House

2. Location

street & number 128 Town House Road N/A not for publication

city or town Union N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Knox code 013 zip code 04862

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11/9/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall 12/31/01

(Former) Union Town House

Knox, Maine

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Government /City Hall, Social /Meeting Hall, Recreation and Culture/Theater/Auditorium

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- Social /Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Greek Revival, Late Victorian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone/Granite, walls Wood/Weatherboard, roof Asphalt, other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

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## DESCRIPTION

The (former) Union Town House is a one-and-a-half story, three-bay, frame, gable fronted Greek Revival structure located on the edge of the business district in Union Maine. The rectilinear building faces west and is set back from Town House Road by about fourteen feet. A new, small garden, enclosed by a wooden picket fence, is located just to the north-west of the front door. A brick patio fronts the garden and leads from the parking area to the entry.

The front facade of the clapboarded building is symmetrical; the doorway is centered beneath the peak of the roof with a single six-over-six window to the north and south of it on both the first and second stories. Narrow corner boards support unobtrusive cornice returns; the relatively thin rake trim is visually absorbed by the overhang of the asphalt roof. Flat trim surrounds the windows and doors on the structure. The front entry features a set of five-panel Victorian double doors with applied molding. A single wall sconce centered over the door provides light to the entry.

The remaining elevations feature the same large six-over-six windows with 12" x 15" glass as found on the front. The north side contains three equally-spaced windows running from west to east, then a exit door that opens onto a small wooden platform, followed by a fourth window to the north. On the south side five windows are more or less equally spaced down the length of the building. The grade at the western majority of the structure parallels the stone and granite foundation and is located approximately six inches below the lowest clapboards. However, about three-fifths of the way back on the south side of the structure (four-fifths on the north) the grade drops significantly; here the structure develops a nearly full basement level. A pair of hinged barn doors and a six-light sash on the south side provide access to the unfinished cellar under the Town House. The east side contains two six-over-six windows on the first story level and a single six-over-six window just below and centered on the peak. On this back side the exterior wall rises almost two-and-a-half stories above grade.

On the interior the Union Town House retains some of its original Greek Revival detailing; but is strongly characterized by the Victorian updates of 1887 and early 20th century modernizations. Just inside the front door is a small foyer with tongue and groove bead board on the walls. A small, sliding, wood-framed ticket window is located on the north wall. Another set of double doors lead to the main hall. Immediately in front of the doors is a large, turned, post which supports an overhanging, enclosed, projection room dating to 1917. In the southwest corner of the structure a hardwood staircase runs along the south and west walls to access the projection room. To the north of the entry a Dutch door leads to a small kitchen. Many of the bead-board cabinets date to the early 20th century, but the stove, sink and other appliances have been updated within the last forty years. The wall over the kitchen counter has been partially removed, providing access to the main room.

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# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

KNOX, MAINE

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The main room of the Union Town House is a large hall with a hardwood floor, arched plaster ceiling, plaster walls with vertical wainscot, and a stage. The eastern fifth of the building was extended in 1887 and provided a stage and back stage area. Doors to either side of the stage access stairs which lead behind the stage. A second door on the south side leads to a pair of bathrooms. The stage floor projects into the hall by approximately eight feet and can also be reached by a front staircase on the north end. The proscenium arch mimics the curve of the ceiling, and then is surmounted by an elongated, flat, wooden, pedimented architrave. This same detail is found over each of the windows and doors in the interior of the structure, however, close examination of these decorative elements reveal that those over the windows and door to the foyer appear to be from the 1840s, with the others added as new portals were cut in 1887 and 1917.

The projection room was added around 1917 to show movies. Six projection slots are still evident in the east wall of the projection room. Access to the roof is through a knee-wall door on the north side of the projection room. From there the truss system of the attic framing is visible. The arched ceiling members hang from the double truss system, which also stabilizes the rafters. The new stage addition is clearly visible at the east end of the attic.

Since the addition of the projector room in 1917 there have been few changes in the structure. The kitchen and bathrooms have been updated in the last 40 years and some lights have been installed. The Historic Society has patched the plaster and painted the interior of the hall, re-glazed the windows, replaced the roof and added extra tie-rods in the attic framing to support the arched ceiling. The structure exhibits a high level of integrity dating to the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Social History
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Politics / Government
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1840 - 1951

**Significant Dates**

1840  
1887  
1917

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Cobb, Ebenezer, Builder

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:

Union Historical Society, Union, Maine

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

KNOX, MAINE

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The (Former) Union Town House was constructed in 1840 by the Town of Union as a place to hold town meetings and conduct civic affairs. Over time, the vernacular, story-and-a-half, Greek Revival clapboard-over-frame building has been the location of many of the town's social and cultural functions. It is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion A for its association with local town government and social history.

Union Maine was incorporated in 1787, and as with many other inland towns of the mid-coast region the population grew steadily and strongly through the first decades of the nineteenth-century. However, although long discussed, there was no official town building until the question was settled at the Town Meeting of 1839:

[It was] voted that we build a town-house, to be located near the powder-house; and that it be built according to the blue plan, 40 by 48 feet, as accepted at a former meeting; that the selectmen be a committee to superintend the building of said house, and give directions as to the height of the posts and finishing said house. And the treasurer be authorized forthwith to enter into bonds with Ebenezer Cobb to build the same for the sum of six hundred dollars, one-half to be paid by the first day of April, 1840, the other half by the first day of September, 1840, when said house is finished; said Cobb to furnish land and other materials suitable for said house." (*Sibley, p. 141.*)

There must have been some disagreement over the use of the structure originally, for in 1844 the town voted to allow the structure to be used for political uses only, but in 1845 this was overturned and the use left to the discretion of the selectmen. In 1846 the upper part of the structure was leased to John W. Lindley "with a privilege for the purpose of finishing a hall..." although it is not known whether he actually carried out this work. Public worship, justices' courts and courts of reference, and local band practice were also held at the Town House during the 1840's. (*Sibley p. 142.*)

The Union Town House is located just up the hill from the town common, which in turn, is surrounded by commercial and religious structures. The Town House's location, near the heart of the community parallels the manner in which Union was the hub of agricultural trade and commerce for the surrounding communities during the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. The 1840 census listed 1,784 occupants of Union; the vast majority were involved with agriculture, however thirteen were involved in commerce and ninety-three in manufacturing and trade. Through the nineteenth century Union's reputation for good soil spread, and it soon became an important agricultural center. The North Knox Agricultural and Horticultural Society sponsored the first of its fairs in Union in 1869. As people came to Union to conduct business, trade livestock, and visit, they also came to take in the entertainment, the shows, the gatherings and the politics.

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(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

KNOX, MAINE

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Town meetings continued to be held in the Town House until 1952, yet its function in the town expanded greatly after it was remodeled in 1887, just a year after the Agricultural Society voted to hold all its annual fairs in Union. (This fair is still among the largest and most respected agricultural fairs in Maine.) At that time another bent was built onto the eastern end of the structure, and a stage and bathrooms added. The increase in the building's significance to the community was immediately evident; the dedication of the new space in 1890 doubled as commencement ceremonies for the first graduating class from Union High School. The Georges Valley Railroad, built in 1894, enabled still more farmers, merchants, traders and their families to reach Union and events were held in the town house to provide them with entertainment and recreation. The hall floor was strengthened by adding oversized timbers to support the 40 foot wide space during dances and meetings. (*Matthews, p. 102; Nash and Kahn, p ?.*)

In 1917 a projection room was added over the front entryway, and a ticket window cut in the north wall of the foyer. Silent movies were shown on Tuesday nights, accompanied by Maine piano players including Danny Patt. Everett Prescott was the first projectionist and the cameragraph he used is on display at the Matthews Museum of Maine Heritage in Union Maine. In addition to the silent (and later "talkie") movies, the Town House continued to host school plays, graduations, community groups, and town meetings. Vaudeville and traveling theater routinely stopped at the Town House; hand bills from The Clifton Comedy Co. (1934), the Geo. M. Bragg Show ('Geo. M Bragg, Feb 17, 1946 5th time here'), The Chicago Players (N.D.), and Harry La Marr in "A New England Home" (N.D.) are plastered on the walls back stage. (*Waterman, 1978; Benner, 1989.*)

In 1952 the town built a new structure to house both the town offices and local meetings, and the Town House was sold to the Storer-Collins-Harding American Legion Post # 110. The members of the legion made no lasting changes to the structure, and the hall continued to be let out for functions. When the Legion Post folded in 1972 the ownership of the structure reverted back to the Town and was immediately sold to the Union Historical Society. Currently the structure is used by the Historical Society much in the same way as it has been used over its life span; it hosts community events, functions, dances, lectures and the occasional showing of a silent movie. As a constantly used public structure, the Union Town House is a remarkable witness to the history of the community for the last 161 years.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) UNION TOWN HOUSE

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## **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property occupies the Town of Union tax map 24, lot 38.

## **Boundary Justification**

The boundary embraces all the property that is historically associated with the (former) Union Town House.

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

1 of 3

Christi A. Mitchell

September 17, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Front facade; looking southeast.

2 of 3

Christi A. Mitchell

September 17, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

South elevation; looking northwest.

3 of 3

Christi A. Mitchell

September 17, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Interior: main hall, kitchen and projection room, looking northwest.