

PH 035 9041

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 9 1976
DATE ENTERED	JUN 30 1976

**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   Belton Court

AND/OR COMMON Ferrin Hall, Barrington College

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Middle Highway

CITY, TOWN Barrington

STATE Rhode Island

VICINITY OF 1 Fernand J. St. Germain

CODE 44

COUNTY Bristol

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 001

CODE 001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Barrington College

STREET & NUMBER Middle Highway

CITY, TOWN Barrington

STATE Rhode Island

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Barrington Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER County Road

CITY, TOWN Barrington

STATE Rhode Island

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Belton Court, the expansive country house of Frederick S. Peck, is a U-shaped complex sited facing south and located just west of Middle Highway in Barrington, Rhode Island. Constructed in stages during the first three decades of the twentieth century, it was designed by Martin and Hall, Providence architects, and was at one time the manor house for an estate of over 800 acres. The former dwelling now serves as a library and administrative and faculty offices for Barrington College which carefully maintains the building and its immediate landscape environment.

Before inheriting Ousamequin Farm, the Peck family property purchased in the seventeenth century, Frederick S. Peck acquired adjacent lands and began to build a massive stone residence. The first wing of the building was put up in 1905-06 with its main elevation facing east onto Middle Highway. Two-and-a-half stories in height, the house was built of rough masonry granite with segmental relieving arches over the windows and doors.\* The roof is a steep, red-tiled gable with a series of three cross-gable pavilions along the front and a bank or dormers on the back. The gable ends are defined by parapets with chimneys at the top. The main entrance is set between the center and right gable pavilion within a porch that wraps around the south end of the building, incorporating a glass-enclosed section, and ends in a porte cochere on the rear. This continuing porch is composed of large natural wood framing that displays an Arts and Crafts influence, also evident in the pounded copper hanging lamps.

The plan of the 1905 wing is organized around an entrance stairhall which extends the full depth of the building with the stairs located at the rear. The main reception room runs across the south, opening onto the porches. The north half of this floor is composed of a library at the front and a dining room and service area behind. The major architectural embellishments of these three public rooms are mantels, two of which are decorated with foliage tiles from the Grueby Faience Company, Boston, Massachusetts. The dining room mantel was carved and painted with the family coat of arms. The second floor was devoted totally to bedrooms, while the servants quarters were located on the third level.

With Peck's expanding interests and activities, a larger residence was constructed in 1927-28 north and west of the original section, forming a U-shaped court facing south. This major addition is more consciously medieval in appearance but maintains the basic massing, height, and material of the earlier unit. At the northeast corner, a four-story, crenellated tower, containing a water tank, dominates the complex. The living area was confined to the northern wing, and the western section was designed for stables and housing for domestics.

The new living unit faces a wide courtyard with paired elm trees and an exedra-ended reflecting pool at the center. The long, gabled structure is broken by two cross-gable pavilions on front and rear. On the courtyard side, these pavilions flank a crenellated central section fronted by a stone porte cochere. As one faces this elevation, the tower rises at the rear right corner.

Within, one passes through an Ionic-columned foyer and a cross hall into a story-and-a-half living hall defined in part by Doric column screens. This entrance hall has a segmental vaulted plaster ceiling with ribs and pendants. A monumental fireplace on the

\*These details and the fairly regular granite voussoirs combine with the consistent rooflines to give some character to the rather crude and now badly-pointed masonry.

See continuation sheet page 1.

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north wall is ornamented by an overscaled broken-scroll-pedimented chimney breast. The same pediment is used for doorways in the columned screens into the foyer and into the stairway at the east. The door at the west end of the hall opens into a formal dining room with simple paneled decoration. Beyond the screen at the east end of the hall a stairway descends half a flight to a paneled reception room with a Gothic carved stone fireplace. The stairway also rises half a flight to a ballroom with a coved and molded plaster ceiling and a mahogany mantel of eighteenth century design. As in the earlier wing, the use of the second floor for bedrooms and third floor for servants further demonstrates the scale of entertaining for which this house was designed.

Between the two main wings, a connecting unit, constructed with the 1928 section or soon thereafter, provided an appropriate repository for Peck's growing collection of rare books and autographed manuscripts. The connecting section consists of one story corridor and a story-and-a-half library with marble floors and soapstone veneered walls. The library is a high rectangular space illuminated by a large central skylight and with glazed bookshelves lining all the walls. The original library table for the center of this room is still owned by the College.

In 1944, Frederick Peck arranged to leave Belton Court to the Providence Homeopathic Hospital, of which he served as President for many years. On his death three years later, the property was considered unuseable for hospital purposes and was sold to a developer. The residential complex was first used by the Edgewood School and then acquired by the Providence Bible Institute now called Barrington College. The building was renamed Ferrin Hall and modern structures have been erected on part of the 110-acre estate, but the area around Belton Court, defined by thick hedges of cypress and natural landscaping, has retained much of its original character.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Collecting
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1905-06, 1927-28

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Martin & Hall, Architects

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Belton Court was the home of Frederick Stanhope Peck (1868-1947), a leader in Republican Party politics; an important businessman in banking, manufacturing, and real estate; and a major collector of books and manuscripts. The son of Leander Remington and Sarah Gould Cannon Peck, Frederick was born and educated in Providence but spent most of his life in Barrington. Peck's varied careers are of primary importance for the history of Rhode Island.

Frederick Peck's first American ancestor was Joseph Peck who immigrated to Hingham, Massachusetts in 1636. With Captain Myles Standish, Governor William Bradford and others, Peck purchased in 1641 from Massassoit or Ousamequin, Sachem of the Wamponoag Indians, a tract of land bounded by Narragansett Bay and the Taunton River. Nathaniel Peck, Joseph's son, settled on part of this land in Barrington which he called Ousamequin Farm. This property remained in the family homestead into the twentieth century. Before Ousamequin Farm descended to Frederick Peck on his father's death, he purchased an adjacent tract of land and erected a stone residence which he called Belton Court for the early home of the Pecks in England. This house became a focus for his business, political and collecting interests. In 1885, Fred Peck started as an office boy in Asa Peck and Company, the family wool business established by Frederick's grandfather in 1866. The company was incorporated in 1903 with Frederick and his father, Leander R. Peck, as the principal stockholders. Frederick served as treasurer for the company, and, after 1909, as its executive director. In addition to managing this firm, he became the president of Lymansville Company (worsted manufacturers), National Exchange Realty Company, and Belton Corporation; vice president of Industrial Trust Company, Felter Company and Metal Textile Corporation; and a director of the Rhode Island Insurance Company, United Electric Railway Company, Providence Gas Company, Morris Plan Company of Rhode Island, and Terminal Warehouse Company of Rhode Island. He was also associated with Harry T. Bodwell in developing Bonnet Shores, Cranston. One of his most intriguing ventures was the creation of Eastern Film Corporation with offices in New York and studios in Florida and at the remodeled Park Brewery on Elmwood Avenue in Providence. From late 1914 until it was destroyed by fire in 1917, the Providence Studio produced a wide range of movies but specialized in commercial films.

Politics became an interest for Peck in 1909 when he was elected to the Barrington Town Council. Two years later the town sent him to the state House of Representatives where he remained a member until 1926. Peck was one of the heirs to the Republican Party machine created by Boss Charles R. Brayton from 1880 to 1910. Serving as the chairman of the finance committee from 1915 to 1926, Peck was then appointed by Governor Aram J. Pothier

See continuation page 2.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Barrington Bulletin (Barrington College), March 1960.  
 Barrington. Two Hundreth Anniversary. Barrington: 1970.  
 Bicknell, Thomas Williams. A History of Barrington, Rhode Island. Providence: Snow & Farnham, 1899.  
 Chapin, Howard M. "Our Rhode Island Ancestors- Joseph Peck," Notebook, the Rhode Island Historical Society. See continuation sheet 3.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY nine

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	306-160 305980	462.5 660 750	B	19	306-150 306110	462.5 400 750
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	19	305980	410 500	D	19	306110	462.5 500

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

306-020 020 660

The property is bounded by Middle Highway on the east, Walker Drive on the north, the western facade of the original stable complex on the west, and the large cypress hedge on the south.

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

Keith N. Morgan, Chief, Curatorial Services April 19, 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission (401)-277-2678

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

150 Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Providence

Rhode Island

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE x

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Thomas Williams*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Active*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*6/30/76*

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*6-25-76*

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to the position of Commissioner of Finance, a post created specifically for Peck, who was the only one to ever hold it. In the first four years, he took a state treasury of \$12,000 with a debt of \$250,000 and reversed that to create a cash balance in excess of \$6,000,000.00. From 1918 to 1932, he served as a Republican National Committeeman, a position of great influence. With the sweeping Democratic victory in 1932, Peck's political career came to an end. To a certain extent, Belton Court was constructed and enlarged for the purpose of entertaining political associates on a lavish scale.

Peck devoted as much energy to his avocation of book and manuscript collecting as to his business and political career. Beginning from an interest in genealogy, he developed a library of first editions by famous authors and American autograph manuscripts which he housed at Belton Court. When sold at auction in 1944, his book collection numbered 8,000 volumes, expensively bound and in excellent condition. Representative high points were the first four folios of Shakespeare's plays and a first edition of Shakespeare's sonnets. His manuscript library was one of the finest private collections in the country. It included multiple sets of Signers of the Declaration of Independence, two complete sets of letters signed by the Presidents while in office, and a more unusual collection of letters by the wives of the Presidents. Also strong were his collection of the letters and papers of George Washington and documents relating to Rhode Island, including letters of Roger Williams and an undated order from President Tyler to authorize the use of Federal troops in the Dorr Rebellion. Other areas of collecting interest included Roman and Phoenician glass, American Indian artifacts, and eighteenth century English portraiture.

In addition to the associations with Frederick S. Peck and the Peck Family, Belton Court with its prominent tower is an important local landmark. Barrington College, which acquired the property through a sealed bid only \$1 higher than the next competitor, has taken the building as a symbol and ceremonial entrance for the school. The continued maintenance of the estate character of Belton Court preserves a good example of early twentieth century, country house architecture and a symbol of the power and position of the Peck family in Rhode Island.

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George Washington Letters from the Collection of Frederick S. Peck, Belton Court  
Barrington, Rhode Island. December: 1927.

Gizzarelli, Nicolas, Sr. "A Road of Many Names." Manuscript history of  
Barrington, Rhode Island, c. 1975.

The National Cyclopedia of American Biography. New York: James T. White & Co., 1949,  
XXXV, 68-69.

Providence Bulletin (Barrington College), Spring, 1958.

Providence Evening Bulletin, January 20, 1947. Obituary for Frederick Stanhope Peck.

Providence Journal, September 6, 1928, P. 1 & 4. Obituary of George Frederick Hall.