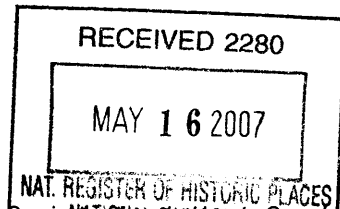


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on the back of the form 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 Weld Town Hall
other names/site number Mystic Tie Lodge, Masonic Lodge

2. Location

street & number 17 School Street N/A not for publication
city or town Weld N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Franklin code 007 zip code 04285

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] 5/14/07
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] 6-27-07
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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WELD TOWN HALL

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DESCRIPTION

Weld Town Hall is a large, two story, wood frame building located in the Franklin County town of Weld, Maine. Erected between 1922 and 1926, the high-posted, gable front building measures approximately 40 by 70 feet, and sits on a 1.4 acre lot bounded on the north by the Weld Brook, and on the east by State Route 156. The building faces northeast (for ease of reference it will be referred to as east facing). A dirt parking area in the front tapers to a dirt driveway that surrounds the building and is separated from the cement foundation only by a narrow band of grass. At the edges of the lot a ring of deciduous trees surround the property and eliminate views to the Brook or adjoining residential properties. The building is sided with unpainted cedar shingles, except for the two attic gable walls, which are clad with clapboards. The asphalt roof is pierced with a brick chimney set just above the eaves near the middle of the north wall.

The facade of the Weld Town Hall is five bays wide on both the first and second floors. However, the fenestration pattern and proportions are not stringently symmetrical or classically composed. The first floor contains a two-leaf, five panel door positioned at the center of the wall. To either side of the door are two double hung wood windows with two-over-one sash. The windows closest to the door are positioned just inches from the door surround, and curiously are positioned so that the top half of the window is elevated above the door header. Uniting these three elements is a gable roof entrance porch and covered deck measuring approximately ten by fourteen feet. The front of the porch is supported by square porch supports which rest on the deck. Two steps in the front and a wooden ramp off the south end of the deck provide access to the porch and entry. The gable wall of the porch is clapboarded, and narrow cornice returns evoke a pedimental-type feature. Because of their height, the tops of the windows are higher than the eave line of the porch, giving the appearance that the porch was added after the building was erected.¹ The outer windows on this level are positioned midway between the porch and the painted corner boards.

The upper story is four bays wide. At this level the middle pair of sash are set directly over the lower windows but the outer pair are inset from those below. A large circular sign, featuring a Masonic symbol and the text "Mystic Tie Lodge 154" is centered on the wall. Directly over the sign, but high in the attic gable wall, is another two-over-one window. All the windows are trimmed with flat stock and thin drip edge above the headers. The wide, overhanging eaves terminate with thin cornice returns.

The north and south elevations are divided into eight equal bays as marked by two-over-one windows on the second floor. The first floor is similarly organized with the exception that the most easterly window bay was omitted on both sides, and the seventh bay is filled with exit doors. The west elevation contains two windows on each floor (as with the front, the upper units are inset from

¹Nothing found to date in the records of the Weld Historical Society or the town addresses the age of the porch and it may be original.

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those below), and a high window is located in the gable wall under the peak of the roof. In addition, there is a wooden exit door and steel fire escape positioned between the second floor windows.

The interior of the Weld Town Hall features both public and private spaces. The first floor contains the large hall and stage, an entrance foyer, and a small kitchen. The second floor contains a large dining room with its own kitchen area in the west end of the building, and rooms utilized by the Lodge Masons towards the front. Several of these latter rooms are not open to the public and thus their characteristics and features are absent from this description.

On the first floor, immediately behind the front doors, is an entrance foyer that stretches two thirds of the width of the building. A two-run stair case with square, paneled newel posts, rises along the east and south exterior walls and a two-leaf, five panel doors to the hall in the west. The north wall of the foyer features two square ticket windows, behind which is the small downstairs kitchen. (This room is accessed from the hall). The walls are finished with horizontal and vertical bead board divide by a chair rail. Bead board was also used to cover the ceilings, and all of these elements are stained and varnished. Two cased carrying beams run east to west across the high ceiling. The floor is narrow hardwood, and all the interior trim consists of stained and varnished flat stock. These finishes are consistent throughout the first floor rooms.

Positioned over the hall doors, and extending partially across the foyer, as well as over the adjacent kitchen, is a projection booth. A vertical post to the floor provides support to the southeast corner of the booth. In the foyer, the original walls of the booth have been replaced with large sheets of plexiglass, allowing the projectors and turntables inside to be viewed from the foyer. The portion of the projection booth that sits directly over the kitchen is partitioned off from the section located over the foyer, and the former room retains its metal walls, ceiling and floor. In essence, this is a fire-proof box. Access to the two rooms of the projection booth is gained through a stepped ladder located in the kitchen. Two hinged hatch windows just below the ceiling level of the hall, cover the three projection apertures: two in the foyer section and one in the metal section of the booth.

The hall and stage occupy the remainder of the first floor. Two levels of low wooden risers line the north and south walls of the hall. Vertical, cased and chamfered, support posts are positioned at the leading edge of the risers. The posts intersect a grid pattern of transverse and longitudinal cased carrying beams which underlie the ceiling and support the second floor. The west end of the room is occupied by a wide stage, with slightly projecting apron, centered between two five panel doors that lead to the back stage dressing areas, which are now outfitted as bathrooms. There is no proscenium arch per se; the edges of the stage opening are simply delineated by painted trim. A velvet, maroon curtain hangs in the side wings of the stage. Two retractable basketball nets are positioned at either end of the room, one over the stage and the other partially blocking one of the projection room hatch windows. As with the foyer, the entire room is finished with varnished and stained bead board. The original floor was replaced with a poly-coated

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maple floor in 1978. In the northeast corner of the room a set of five-panel doors leads to the small kitchen. This room, which features bead board cabinets, was recently updated with new appliances.

According to A History of Weld, Maine the second floor was not completed until 1926. The foyer staircase leads to a long hallway which runs against the southern exterior wall half-way down the length of the building before turning north and continuing towards the center of the building. This hallway provides access to the public spaces to the west, and the rooms of the Masons to the east. At the end of the corridor is a room utilized by the Masons as a billiard room. From here doors open to their front meeting space and a small, windowless ante room, as well as into the dining room to the west. Another door, positioned at the corner of the hallway leads to a small hall which accesses an old coat room and bathroom, and the dining room and kitchen. Essentially one large room, the north end of the dining room is separated from the kitchen by bead board counters (islands). Cupboards, cabinets and a counter, inset with a steel sink, line the north wall. A large industrial stove is positioned in the northeast corner. Long rows of wooden tables stretch across the room. A vertical tie rod descends through the center of the roof and connects to the underlying carrying beam. (Other rods are located within the partition walls). All of the accessible rooms on the second floor feature bead board clad walls, however on this level most of the walls and woodwork are painted rather than stained and varnished. In addition all of the visible ceilings (including the hallways and bathroom) are tin, trimmed with a fleur D'lis patterned metal cornice.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

POLITICS / GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1922 - 1957

Significant Dates

1922 - 1957

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Schofield, Fessenden (builder, att.)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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:

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Since its construction, the Weld Town Hall has been at the center of community affairs. Countless votes, measureless concerts, numberless dinners, and numerous movies, plays, and ceremonies have occurred within its four walls and two spacious floors. Erected by the Weld Masonic Lodge between 1922 and 1926, the hall has been owned by the Town of Weld since 1940. The Weld Town Hall continues to function as a Masonic meeting facility as well as serves the residents of the Town as a meeting hall, performance space, and athletic venue. The Weld Town Hall is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A, for its use as a public hall from 1922 through the present, and for its association with Weld's town governmental functions since 1925.

The future town of Weld was first surveyed in 1793 and by 1800 started to attract settlers, mostly from New Hampshire. In 1812 it was organized as Webb's Pond Plantation, named for the large body of water located at the center of the town. Four years later, the Plantation was incorporated as the town of Weld, named after one of the land owners, Benjamin Weld of Boston, Massachusetts. Two villages developed in the 19th century, the upper village and the lower village, both on the east side of the pond. Initially the Town House was located in the upper village, but eventually the strength of this settlement gave way to the lower village, which increasingly attracted most of the town's industry and dwellings. Weld is located in a picturesque valley in south central Franklin County, and is surrounded by substantial mountains, historically provided the resources for much of the town's economic development. Mount Blue State Park borders the town on the east, and along with Webb Lake, draws a significant number of recreational visitors to the area.

The Weld Town Hall was erected in 1922 by the local chapter of the Masonic Lodge. The Mystic Tie Lodge, No. 154, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, of Weld received their charter on May 4, 1870. Freemasonry underwent substantial growth during the Civil War and in the years that followed, and the Mystic Tie Lodge was one of 63 franchises established in Maine between 1860 and 1871. According to A History of Weld, Maine, the Weld Masons initially met in the vestry of the Weld Congregational Church. In 1916, the Trustees of the Charity Fund of Mystic Tie Lodge purchased a 1.4 acre lot on the edge of Houghton Brook from Dora W. Winter, and began to plan for the erection of a new hall. In order to raise the needed funds, four years later fourteen members of the Weld Masonic Lodge organized as the Weld Masonic Building Association. They incorporated with \$10,000 of capital stock and an equal amount of common stock, of which they sold in fifty dollar shares. According to the certificate of organization, the "purposes of said corporation are buying, selling, building, owning, holding mortgages, leasing, renting, contracting for, managing, and generally dealing in real estate and personal property in the town of Weld."² Local tradition holds

²History of Weld, p. 73. Local history in Weld asserts that the land for the Mystic Tie Lodge was donated by H.G. Woodard. According to a letter from Woodward to a Mr. Ross Scammon, dated 1/12/1920, Woodward asked that the proposed 'dance hall' not be built across from his house on Church

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that the building was designed and built by Fessenden Schofield, a Mason and one of the founding members of the Building Association, who was also a house carpenter and contractor. By the end of December in 1922 the building was erected and the downstairs completed. At this time the Trustees of the Charity Fund of the Mystic Tie Lodge transferred the land they had obtained from Winter, and "all the buildings and improvements that have been made on the said premises," to the Building Association. Although the building was put into service immediately, neither the Lodge rooms nor dining room on the second floor were completed until 1926.

According to a permit mounted over one of the ticket windows, the Weld Masonic Building Association received a licence to operate the 'Mystic Theatre' in the building in 1923. Residents of Weld relate that there were two entertainment venues in town in the 1920s: the Pavilion, a dance hall that also showed movies, and the Mystic Theatre. At first silent movies were screened, accompanied by a local pianist. The theater then upgraded to sound pictures once the technology had become available. The original projection booth was located over the kitchen, and the section over the entryway was added later. The films were projected onto a screen that was fastened by hooks on the ceiling. Much of the original projection equipment remains in the building, including a pair of 1914 Simplex projectors, two turntables, rewinding spools, projection stands, and generators to run the equipment, as well as the equipment manuals, and a vintage orange soda machine. According to the Weld Historical Society, which documented the equipment and renovated the projection room in 1999, the movies were delivered to the Theatre via parcel post, and word of mouth was the only known advertisement. Although no firm date has been established, older town residents remember that films were shown through the 1930s.

In 1929, (three days before the stock market crash), the Weld Masonic Building Association took out a \$5500 mortgage with the Wilton Trust Company. The terms of the mortgage required the sum be repaid in one year. Apparently the Association was unable to meet this obligation, and in 1937 the Wilton Trust Company repossessed the building unopposed. At the town's annual meeting in 1939 the residents approved a warrant article to purchase the structure, and after paying the bank \$2750 in December of 1940, took over the Masonic Building and renamed it the Weld Town Hall. The Mystic Tie Lodge of Weld, which in 2007 has 75 active members, leases the second floor front rooms from the town for a nominal sum.

The town's interest in the building was not new in 1939. The year after the building was completed the town voted to move its annual meeting from the Town House at Weld Corner (upper village), to a location in the lower village. Built in 1845, the old Town House had been "the center for

Street as planned, and offered to procure another lot. However, the deeds for the Masonic Lodge do not support this scenario and it is possible that Mr. Woodward was referring to the venue of another organization. For deed of Winter to the Trustees of Charity fund, see Book 197, p. 208, Franklin County Registry of Deeds. For the Weld Masonic Building Association's certificate of organization see Book, 221 p. 500, Franklin County Registry of Deeds. Woodward's letter is in the collections of the Weld Historical Society.

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Weld social life" for many years, and as with many of these civic buildings, had also hosted religious services, dances, and other cultural events.³ But by the early decades of the twentieth century the bulk of the population had concentrated in the lower village, and a new site, more convenient to the residents, was sought for town functions. Thus, beginning in 1925, the annual meeting was moved to the Masonic Building. After the second floor was completed the following year a public dinner following the annual meeting was added to the day's roster, a tradition that continues today.

In addition to movies, town meetings, and dinners, the Mystic Theatre/Weld Town Hall hosted traveling theater troupes, dances, and Chataqua lecturers. Commencing in 1923 and through the 1950s the old Weld High School, which had been located just up the road, used the theater for its annual graduation exercises and other school functions. (Commencement announcements refer to both the 'Mystic Theatre' and the 'Masonic Hall'). Both the Mystic Tie Lodge, the associated Mystic Star Chapter (Order of the Eastern Star), and at times the Blue Mountain Grange, utilized the hall for public or ceremonial events. Friday night dances were held continually until the early 1960s, when they were apparently curtailed due to 'rowdyism'. During both the Town's sesquicentennial in 1966, and the American Bicentennial in 1976 the Town Hall was the site of many celebratory events, including public dinners, lectures, and a ball. Each year as part of the Weld Heritage Days a pancake breakfast is served to the community in the dining room. In addition, the Hall is presently used as a gymnasium by the local elementary school, as well as for meetings of the Historical Society, Webb Lake Association, and for a variety of exhibitions and fairs.

³Masterman, et al, p. xii.

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Masterman, Christine, B., et al. I Remember When...A Weld Family Album. (Weld, Maine: Weld Historical Society), 1993.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is depicted on the Town of Weld tax map # 23, lot 118.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the nominated property as described above have been directly and consistently associated with the Weld Town Hall since its construction in 1922.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
2 October 2006
East facade; facing northwest.

Photograph 2 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
22 March 2007
Interior of first floor hall; facing northwest.

Photograph 3 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
2 October 2006
Interior, front foyer with elevated projector boot. Facing north.

Photograph 4 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
2 October 2006
Interior, second floor dining room and kitchen. Facing northwest.