



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 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 East Eddington Public Hall

other names/site number Grange Hall, Comins Hall, Eddington-Clifton Civic Center

2. Location

street & number Airline Road; .4 miles west of intersection with ME Rt 46 South N/A not for publication

city or town Eddington N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Penobscot code 019 zip code 04428

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.)

James S. Fildes 12/18/03
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): _____

Edson H. Beall 1/28/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL / Meeting Hall

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Auditorium

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL / Meeting Hall

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Auditorium

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE / Granite

CEMENT

walls WOOD / Weatherboard

SYNTHETICS / Vinyl

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK

Narrative Description

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

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EAST EDDINGTON PUBLIC HALL

PENOBSCOT CO., MAINE

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DESCRIPTION

The East Eddington Public Hall is a large, gable-fronted Italianate-influenced frame building in the center of East Eddington village. Constructed in 1879 by members of the East Eddington Public Hall Company the north facing structure is positioned on the south side of Airline Road, (ME Rt. 46) in a neighborhood of residences, churches and small shops. Although the two-and-a-half story building is quite large its simple stylistic details and pleasing proportions helps to blend the structure into the community.

The Public Hall was erected by members of the community under the direction of John James Temple, a local carpenter and justice. The original building sits on granite foundation stones (repaired on the southwest side with concrete), while a two-story addition on the south end rests on concrete block. The asphalt roof is pierced with two chimneys on each side of the roof plane; one towards the north and the other towards the south. The chimney locations correspond to the interior corners of the second floor hall. The building is clad with clapboards, with the exception of the front facade, which has clapboards under vinyl siding. The front of the building is three-bays wide and contains a set of paired four-over-four wooden sash windows on either side of the front door. Each of the paired windows is united under a protruding crown. Another three sets of windows are positioned on the second floor and a single set is located in the attic story under the soffit of the gable peak. The broad, overhanging roof is unornamented except for cornice returns, and a narrow frieze and corner boards. The original bi-fold front doors at the center of the facade have been replaced with a smaller pair of doors, however, the entrance hood, supported on scrolled wooden brackets, remains in place and defines the original size and composition of the center bay.

The east and west side elevations contain five, paired, four-over-four windows, evenly spaced along the side walls on both the first and second floors. (An exit door with access ramp has been installed in former window location on the farthest south bay on the west side.) Although the windows on the facade are all of the same size, the second floor windows on the sides are substantially taller. Towards the south end of each side elevation a narrow corner board marks the edge of the original Hall and the start of the stage and woodshed addition built in 1911. The addition has a three-sided hipped roof that is slightly shorter than that of the original building. The addition covers the full width of the building and adds one bay to the side elevations. A single four-over-four sash is located on each floor of the addition's east and west sides, while the south elevation contains a single double-hung window on each floor.

The interior of the East Eddington Public Hall reflects its use as a building designed to host large gatherings, community events and smaller meetings. On the first floor the entrance foyer is at the center of the building, to the west is a small room with a large open ticket booth, behind which the three turn staircase leads to the second floor. The foyer is finished with plaster walls above 3 1/2' wide vertical, painted boarding; the boarding continues up the stairs, and surrounds the ticket booth as well, and the interior trim

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for the original exterior doors has been retained. Immediately to the east of the entrance is a small meeting room, used historically as a library and Scout room. This room has plastered walls, and ceiling, and a parlor stove in the corner that is attached to the chimney in the next room. To the south of the entrance foyer is a large dining and meeting room. In the southeast corner of the earlier building are two kitchen and service rooms, which feature built-in cabinets, pie shelves, a serving window to the dining room and an eight foot long tin sink. In the southwest corner of the building is a storage / meeting room and furnace room, which was installed in 1983, and an original staircase to the second floor hall. Behind the main block of the building the addition contains a woodshed, out of which two modern bathrooms have been installed in the southwest corner behind the staircase. With the exception of the furnace room and the addition, each of the rooms on the first floor are finished with vertical board siding and plaster walls.

The second floor of the Public Hall contains the Shaw auditorium and stage, another small meeting room in the northeast corner of the building, a coat check room and staircase to the third floor balcony. A pair of four-panel Victorian style doors with applied moulding and ornamental cast-iron knobs, lead to the hall, while a sliding wooden, four-panel door leads to the cloakroom and stairs. (All the doors in the building retain their original hardware, including ornamental slip-pin hinges and ornamental knobs). The Hall is a very large room, occupying four-fifths of the building's mass. The floor of the hall is finished with hardwood, and the walls are decorated with painted vertical board wainscoting, topped with a simple chair rail and plaster walls above. Chimneys are located in each of the four corners of the room and two of the original four wood stoves used to heat the room are still present. At the south end of the hall is the stage, sited under a proscenium arch, with a narrow apron extending into the hall. The front of the apron is decorated with additional boarding, but the sides of the arch consist of paneled pilasters sitting on paneled plinths. The top of the arch is currently obscured by a drop ceiling, however it consists of two paneled piers above the pilasters connected by a paneled entablature. To either side of the stage doors lead to the back stage area, which was built in 1911, and contains a small dressing room, and a side gallery for accessing the rigging. In contrast to the rest of the building the back stage area is finished in 1" tongue and groove board. The hand-painted grand curtain depicts a romantic scene on Lake Geneva in Switzerland; this curtain is rolled rather than raised as the framing of the stage addition did not include space for a fly loft.

A third floor balcony with removable paneled walls and raked floor is located above the second floor foyer and meeting room at the north end of the building. This balcony is currently obscured by the drop ceiling, however, the seating area remains intact, and from this space the top of the arch, a plaster medallion in the center of the original plaster ceiling and remnants of wall paper borders can be seen. The molded balcony railing, which is supported by wooden brackets, is visible in the north wall of the hall. Although the quality of the space is diminished by the drop ceiling, the full original configuration can be easily restored by removing the ceiling.

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.)

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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

AGRICULTURE

POLITICS / GOVERNMENT

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance

1879 - 1953

Significant Dates

1879

1911

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John James Temple

Primary location of additional data:

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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PENOBSCOT CO., MAINE

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the small town of Eddington Maine there is no building more connected to the town and the community than the East Eddington Public Hall. This two story frame building with a dining room and kitchen on the first floor and large hall and stage on the second floor, has been the site of town meetings, plays, fairs, receptions, lectures, dances and countless dinners since it was built. It is the only large meeting place serving the rural communities of Eddington and neighboring Clifton, and throughout its history has been made available free of charge for public events, programs and projects. The East Eddington Public Hall is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its historic association with the town's agricultural history; for its important political and governmental role as the location of town meetings and voting; for its 124 year association with the social and cultural institutions of the town; and for as a location for local performing arts.

The East Eddington Public Hall was constructed in 1879, but its genesis lies in the establishment of the East Eddington Farmers' Club which was formed three years earlier. This Farmers' Club was a gathering of 43 local agriculturalists and community members which met to discuss agricultural practices, experiment with new breeds and techniques, or to develop cooperative solutions to common farming problems. Historian Clarence Day describes the history and organization of these clubs in Maine:

"Farmers' clubs were started elsewhere in New England before they came to Maine. Where the first one was formed in this state is unknown, but the one at Newport held a local fair in 1852. A club was organized at Bethel in 1853 that was for many years one of the most successful in the state. By 1860 Maine had at least twenty active clubs.

Their organization was very simple. Some limited their membership to men; some admitted women also. Some charged a small membership fee; others only required the new members to sign the club constitution. Some had dues, others did not. Membership often included the doctor, lawyer, minister, and other people from the nearby village as well as farm people. Membership usually was not large, although the club located in Minot and Herbon at one time had about two hundred members." (Day, p. 181-182).

Although organized locally, each club was entitled to a small amount of financial support through the Maine Board of Agriculture, which also reported on the clubs' activities in the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture. By the 1875 there were an estimated 75 to 100 clubs in Maine. (Day, p. 183). Many of these groups, including the East Eddington Club, sponsored annual agricultural exhibitions, which gave the local agriculturalists a chance to exhibit their products and livestock, and educate each other about the latest techniques and machinery. The East Eddington Club ran its first fair in about 1878 and its last about 1901. In 1878 the Club decided to form a separate, but affiliated association called the East Eddington Public Hall Company. Shares were sold to community residents at a fixed value of \$5. These funds were probably augmented through the Board of Agriculture stipend and the

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proceeds from the fairs, and in 1879 the East Eddington Public Hall was built. Technically owned by the Public Hall Company, the Hall was used extensively by the Farmers' Club, as well as being available to other community groups. As early as 1882, both the fair and the hall were prominently mentioned as among defining characteristics of the town: "Eddington has an annual fair, held in the large public hall. It makes a very creditable exhibit which is liberally patronized by the people of the town and surrounding country, and by the citizens of Bangor." (*History of Penobscot County*, p. 335). The hall was further described as "neat and spacious". Day puts the presence of the Public Hall in a wider perspective:

"Very few clubs had their own halls; the one at East Eddington was an exception. Members met in the schoolhouse, meeting house, or in private homes. Meetings were held regularly during the winter months but not during the busy summer season. When women attended, it was their custom to meet by themselves for a program of their own and later to join the men for a program of common interest or for a social hour. The men ranged over the whole field of agriculture from bees to butter, and from beef to Baldwins. Some prepared and read papers, others who were articulate gave talks, and all were expected to take part in the discussions. The result was a wider range of knowledge for all and a good-natured rivalry in improvement. Most important for the individual in the opinion of Nathaniel T. True, founder and mainspring of the Bethel club: "It stirs him up to be a better thinking man as well as a working man."

Farmers' clubs had other activities. Some established small libraries and encouraged the reading of books. Some, like those at Bethel, Harrison, and Prospect, held annual exhibits; but few, like the Litchfield club, owned their own fairgrounds." (Day, p. 182).

The association of the Farmers' Club and the Public Hall in East Eddington continued into the twentieth century, when the *Maine Farmer* remarked that the "The East Eddington club still holds to organization and owns one of the best halls in the state." (November 12, 1914). However, perhaps because the Farmers' Clubs were local organizations rather than regional or statewide groups, their numbers decreased starting in the 1880s, at the same time that the Patrons of Husbandry, or Grange, were gaining in popularity.

While the Farmers' Clubs started in the 1850s, the history of the Grange has its basis in post-Civil War agricultural crises. The following two paragraphs are from a brochure announcing the photographic exhibit titled: "Ritual and Community: The Maine Grange."

"The Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, is an agriculturally-based secret society founded in 1867. The Order, open to both men and women, was designed to meet the economic, social, and educational needs of a class of Americans - the small farmer - whose day to day lives were being irrevocably transformed in the post-Civil War period. The proliferation of the railroad, the mass production of farm machinery, and the increasing control of a new class of business men known as "speculators" or "middle-men" over the sale and distribution of farm products were a few of the many influences which led to widespread

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enthusiasm for the Grange in the 1870s. National membership in the Grange grew to over 1 million members in the wake of the 1873 depression, when farmers joined the organization as a means of buying and selling farm goods at wholesale prices. In the mid-1870s, membership plummeted as most Grange cooperative ventures failed to meet members' expectations.

By the 1880s, however, Grange membership in Maine was on the increase, part of what has been dubbed "the second Grange movement" centered in the Northeast; by 1887, Maine had the largest Grange membership in the nation. The focus of the second movement was an emphasis on the Grange's educational and social benefits." (Brown, 1992)

The local or subordinate hall was the focus for most of the activities of the Grange. Each of these structures featured large gathering rooms where the rituals and meetings were held, and many also contained a stage and / or a dining room.

"In Grange halls farm families share their social activities, discuss their mutual problems, plan programs and fearlessly face conditions which call for skillful leadership, and out of which many a betterment project is evolved.

Here in these meeting halls, rural people through their Granges have formulated and carried out projects of far-reaching effect to themselves and to their city neighbors. Starting in Grange meetings, often in good-natured discussion, have been such great undertakings as delivery of mail to farm homes, rural electrification, improved highways, better schools and countless other worthy achievements, which perhaps never would have been attempted but for the nucleus of promotion created in alert Subordinate Granges." (Gardner, pp. 366-367.)

Indeed, in 1889 the East Eddington Grange, # 301 Patrons of Husbandry was formed at the Public Hall; among the names of its charter members were several individuals who had also formed the Farmers' Club, and who held shares in the Public Hall. According to the Eddington Grange's historian "in the early days the grange met at 7:00 every Saturday night. The Grange paid 25 cents each night for the use of the hall and \$1.50 each quarter for the use of the piano." Initially, when the regional grange (Pomona) met at the East Eddington Public Hall there were insufficient facilities for stabling the horses, and eventually a small stable was attached to the building, now removed. Although in many places the coming of the Grange rang the death knell for the local Farmers' Club, in East Eddington the two coexisted for a number of years. One local historian asserts that the Club disbanded in 1901 (Wood, p. 33), while another states it broke up in 1911 (Rube, p. 17), and the *Maine Farmer* suggests the Club was still active in 1914. Although the demise of the Farmers Club may not be firmly established, in 1911 the Public Hall evolved physically to better serve the Grange with the addition of the requisite stage.

The town of Eddington was incorporated in 1811, and one hundred years later a large Centennial

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Celebration occurred in the town, which included a ball game, band concert, dinner served at the Public Hall and an extensive program of music, lectures, and dancing to an orchestra. In preparation for this event the Public Hall received its first update: an 18 foot extension was added to the building. This two story addition was placed on the rear of the building (south) and enclosed a woodshed on the first floor and provided for a stage on the south end of the hall. The presence of a stage is a character defining feature of most Grange Halls; many of their programs included vocal and musical performances. The 1911 addition is physically distinct from the remainder of the second floor hall in that it is finished not in the 3 1/2" wide vertical wainscoting and plaster of the earlier hall, but is clad on the interior almost completely in varnished, narrow, tongue and groove boarding.

In addition to its association with the Farmer's Club and the Grange, the East Eddington Public Hall has been the location of Town Meeting beginning in 1879. The annual meetings alternated between the Pine Tree Hall in Eddington (Bend Village) and the Public Hall, but after the Pine Tree Hall burned in 1936 the Town Meetings settled at the subject property, which was the largest public space in the town. In the 1970s these meetings were relocated to the new school, but the Public Hall continues to function as a voting site on election days.

The East Eddington Public Hall has been host to the majority of the town's social and cultural events. Since the stage was added in 1911, the Hall has hosted traveling vaudeville performances, concerts by local performers and bands, and innumerable plays and musicals by both traveling and local artistic groups. In the 1970s the Hall was the site of 'Dick Stacey's Jamboree', a regionally televised talent show filmed live every Saturday night. As the only large publicly available facility in the area, the structure has received continuous, if ever changing use from community groups including the Boy Scouts (sponsored by the Grange since 1947), the Girl Scouts, 4-H, Weight Watchers, the Historical Society, the Snowmobile club, ATV Club, and a Bingo group. The hall is also utilized by groups for special occasions, including receptions, family reunions, and craft fairs. In 1983 the East Eddington Public Hall Company dissolved, and the building was deeded to a new organization, named the Eddington - Clifton Civic Center. The purpose of the new organization was to maintain and manage the property for the benefit of the people in the area. Shortly after the transfer of the property, the building was renamed Comins Hall in honor of the Comins Family who were active in the state, county, and town government for four generations, and among which could be found the founders of the Farmers Club, the Public Hall Co., and the local Grange. Although somewhat physically altered by the exigencies of time, code and use, the building's importance to the community, and its significance as a living piece of the towns agricultural heritage remains unabated.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.36

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 19 532711 4959739
Zone Easting Northing

3 19
Zone Easting Northing

2 19
Zone Easting Northing

4 19
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 3 July 2003

street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is fully described by the Town of Eddington tax map number 27, lot 37.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property contains all the land and remaining buildings historically associated with the East Eddington Public Hall.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
21 August 2002
North elevation; facing south.

Photograph 2 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
21 August 2002
North and west elevations; facing southeast.

Photograph 3 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
21 August 2002
Interior, second floor hall; facing south.

Photograph 4 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
21 August 2002
Interior, first floor entry; facing southwest.

Photograph 5 of 5
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
21 August 2002
Interior, first floor kitchen; facing east.