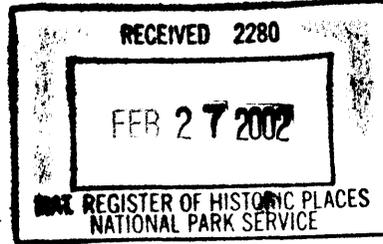


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



346

ok

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 Samuel Penney House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 78 Maple Street N/A not for publication
city or town Mechanics Falls N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04256

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] 2/25/02
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] 4-11-02
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

SAMUEL PENNEY HOUSE
Name of Property

ANDROSCOGGIN CO., MAINE
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.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / SINGLE DWELLING

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / SINGLE DWELLING

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
COLONIAL REVIVAL / GEORGIAN REVIVAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Brick/Granite
walls Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other Stained Glass/Leaded Glass
Composition ornament

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

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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1900-1904

Significant Dates

1900-1904

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

MILLER, WILLIAM R. Architect

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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ANDROSCOGGIN CO., MAINE

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DESCRIPTION

The Samuel R. Penney house on the corner of Maple and Summer Streets in Mechanic Falls, Maine is an extraordinary example of Georgian Revival architecture set in the heart of a small mill town. Built between 1900 and 1904, the two-and-a-half story, three bay, hipped-roof structure is dominated by a multi-component projecting front portico with Corinthian columns and an ornate pediment. The house is located on an oversized corner lot, with maple trees in the front, one block west of the Main Street. Immediately adjacent to the property on the east and south are the sidings and tracks of the Maine Central Railroad and Canadian National Railroad, and the Mechanics Falls depot to the northeast. The other structures in the area are a mixture of commercial (Post Office), manufacturing, and residential, the latter featuring remodeled farm houses, a remodeled octagonal house and many small, mid-twentieth century, single family homes.

The main mass of the house is almost square and features a central, two-flue chimney protruding through the center of the hipped ridge. A pedimented dormer is located on the east and the west roof fields. Extending behind the house to the south is a story-and-a-half integral ell; on the east side of the ell is a screened-in porch with Corinthian columns. The house is set on a brick and granite foundation, is roofed with asphalt shingles, and sided with painted clapboards.

The entire structure is adorned with Neo-classical elements, yet nowhere are they used as extensively as on the front of the house. The three bay facade, at its simplest, contains first and second story leaded glass windows flanking a center door and Palladian window. Each window consists of a large single pane bottom sash and narrow upper sash with intersecting lead tracery. On the first floor, the windows are graced by a wide entablature depicting draped swags of composition plaster. On the second floor, the top of the windows abut the wide, but plain, frieze board. The front door is flanked by a pair of fluted pilasters and decorated with the same festoon entablature. The overhanging roof is ornamented with successive courses of dentils, soffit modillions, and finally, an ovolo-molded crown.

Just below the roof line a large pediment, supported by four two-story Corinthian columns, projects from the center of the facade, over the Palladian window. The dentil, modillion, and ovolo ornamentation continues around the pediment. A plaster patera is located at the center of the recessed frieze and is surrounded by floral design in plaster. Attached to the front of the house is a raised brick patio with a balustrade to the east and west of the front door. At the center of this patio, a one-story portico projects even further away from the center of the house and envelopes the front entrance. Supported by three Corinthian columns at each corner and paired columns at the back, the portico is topped by another balustrade and matching entablature. The pediment, portico, patio, balustrades, Palladian window and sets of columns combine to ensure that the facade of the house is grand in its ornamentation, its scale and its projecting dimensionality.

The three bay west elevation is organized so that the center bay is again emphasized, but to a lesser extent. Between the two sets of windows, a large window box containing four stained glass windows, projects from the side of the house between the first and second floors. The rounded corners of the window box and the elimination of the modillions on it give this feature a slightly out of place feel on the building; however an almost exact copy of this feature is found on his brother, Charles Penney's, house, suggesting it is indeed original. The four panes of glass are arranged in a cruciform pattern, and

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depict shields and hearts on a field of horizontal ribbon. On the interior, this beautiful feature is located at the landing of the main staircase. Although it is a typical example of American Opalescent glass design, the craftsmanship is well executed and the windows are a significant visual element within the house.

The east elevation is similar to the west except that the window box is not present. Attached to the back of the house is a story-and-a-half gable roofed ell. A chimney is located midway along the ridge, and a rear door and bulkhead are located on the south exposure. Along the eastern side of the ell is a screened in, covered porch, with four pairs of Doric columns. The windows in the ell are two-over-two sash with plain glass.

The interior of the house is as detailed and formal as the exterior. A small vestibule leads from the grain painted front door into the center entry hall. To the left and right, two pairs of gilded Corinthian pilasters/columns support each end of arched openings to the parlor and waiting rooms; sliding eight-panel pocket doors separate these rooms from the entry hall when closed. A solid, decorated panel is present within the arch structure, and applied to this frieze are composition plaster details, including festoons and laurel wreaths. To the left of the entryway is the parlor, and behind that, the large formal dining room. A sitting room is located to the west of the dining room. A bathroom is situated between the sitting room and the waiting room, under the main staircase. Each of the downstairs rooms, with the exception of those in the ell (the kitchen, summer kitchen, and butler's pantry), feature a simply patterned, hardwood floor, plaster walls, picture rail, and built-in features including china cabinets, servants bells, and bookcases. A stenciled pattern remains above the picture rail in the sitting room, and may have been found in each of the other rooms before crown molding was installed. In the southwest corner of the living room is an elaborately carved neoclassical fireplace surrounded by glazed green ceramic tiles. Another set of columns support an arch, decorated with scroll-sawn details in the shape of a fan, between the living room and dining room. With the exception of the entry hall chandelier, and first floor bathroom, the interior contains all original hardware, fixtures, light plates and lights.

Rising from within the waiting room is the main staircase, the highlight of which is the stain glass window at the landing. The upstairs contains three bedrooms off the central hall, which again, is highlighted by sets of Corinthian columns supporting two broad entablatures at intersections in the hall. A small seating area is adjacent to the Palladian window, which opens onto the ballustrated portico. Early 20th century wool carpeting remains in two of the bedrooms, and the master bedroom contains a tiled fireplace similar to that in the parlor below. Dutchmen in the hall floor indicate that the small bedroom to the north of the staircase was created by removing an earlier balcony and enclosing one half of the upstairs hall; however this change occurred early as the molding and craftsmanship of the newer door and wall match that of the other upstairs rooms. To the south of the central hall is a narrow back hall with grain painted pine flooring, that leads to a fourth bedroom, bathroom, and the garret space over the ell. The partially-finished garret contains the stairs to the attic, the back stairs to the kitchen, and a small bedroom for the servants. In contrast to the other plastered and ornamented bedrooms, the

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servants' room is finished in unpainted tongue and grove bead board paneling, and contains the remains of an intercom system previously wired to the kitchen. The upstairs bath was re-finished in the 1930s or 1940s with unusual, enameled, cast-steel wall tiles of various shapes and colors. These tiles were mounted onto a fiberboard backing which in turn was affixed to the wall.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed beginning in 1900, the Samuel R. Penney House in Mechanic Falls, Maine is an extraordinary example of Colonial Revival Architecture. The 10 room house (excluding servants quarters) is not overly large in scale, however it features extensive and superb exterior and interior Neo-Classical details, through which the structure is distinguished from its neighbors in this small mill town. It was one of three identical houses commissioned by the brothers Samuel, Almont and Charles Penney to be built near the family's machine shop; however, it alone survives as built. The Almont Penney House was destroyed by fire, and the Charles Penney House was moved across town and partially dismembered in the 1940s. The Samuel R. Penney Jr. House is eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion C for its local architectural significance.

The J. W. Penney & Sons, Co., of Mechanic Falls, was a well known and very successful family run business specializing in steam engines and boilers. When the three sons decided to build new homes at the turn of the century it did not go unrecognized by the press.

“Architect W. R. Miller of Lewiston is making the plans for three house for Penney Brothers of the J.W. Penney & Son’s Company, machinists and founders, Mechanic Falls. There are three brothers, each of whom is to build a house. Mr. Miller is also making plans for the public library building at Fairfield, donated to the town by E.J. Lawrence.” (Industrial Journal, # 1065, June 1, 1900.)

Prior to accepting this commission, William R. Miller had primarily designed public structures such as churches, hotels and libraries. His style showed a fondness for “richly ornamented historical styles, particularly the French Renaissance” and as such the Penney House was lavishly adorned with ornamental plaster, Corinthian columns and pilasters, pediments, porticos and leaded and stained glass windows. Initially the three houses were very similar, if not identical, in interior and exterior design although each family later made small changes. The following, from *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine, Vol. V, #14: William R. Miller*, describes the architect and the house:

Few architects in Maine produced designs as flamboyant and picturesque as William Robinson Miller. With a state-wide practice, based first in Lewiston and later, with Raymond J. Mayo, in Portland, Miller specialized in schools, libraries, hotels and other structures intended for public use. The firm of William R. Miller lasted from 1896 until 1907, when it became Miller & Mayo.

Residential design seems to have figured less prominently among the architect’s commissions. His earliest known house was built in 1898 for William Greenleaf in Auburn. With its large asymmetrical massing and colonial Revival trim, the Greenleaf House is typical of the residential architecture of the period in the Lewiston-Auburn area. More distinctive are the three identical houses Miller designed for the Penny (sic) family in Mechanic Falls in 1900. Only one of these, built for Samuel Penny (sic), survives largely unaltered. It represents a traditional Colonial Revival arrangement with clapboard siding a hipped roof, and Neo-Classical porticoes. The use of exterior trim, however, is quite lavish, especially for a small mill town in western Maine. As such it is one of the architect’s

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most distinguished accomplishments. (Reed, 1988).

The construction of the three residential homes reflects the success of the family's business. After training as a blacksmith and machinery repairman John Wintham Penney started a machine shop specializing in steam engines in 1880. Samuel R. Penney and Almont R. Penney were made partners in their father's firm in 1886 and the name of the business was changed to the J.W. Penney & Sons Co. (The third brother, Charles, also participated but to a lesser extent). By 1897 Samuel was in charge of the entire construction department, and after his brother Almont's death in 1902 and his father's death in 1909 he became president of the company. The J.W. Penney & Sons, Co. manufactured steam engines, pulp and paper mill machinery, passenger and freight elevators, pulleys, hangers, shafting, and Finley paper cutters. They were dealers of boilers and steam driven appliances, and the company facilities included a machine shop, blacksmith shop, foundry, pattern shop, pattern house and warehouse, all located in the immediate vicinity of the Penneys' Maple Street residences. In 1898 the *Lewiston Saturday Journal* reported that Almont R. Penney had met with the Stanley brothers, inventors of the Stanley Steamer, a steam driven vehicle. By October of that year the J.W. Penney Co. had created the first production run of engines for the Steamer, and by the following February were planning to build 'motor carriages' at their factory. (Fraser, p. 52,53, 54, 179-182). The Stanley Steamer was one of the earliest steam automobiles and a very profitable and publically acclaimed invention of Maine natives F.E. and F.O. Stanley.

Several of the products manufactured in their shop have been found incorporated into the Penney house. At some point prior to 1893 J.W. Penney brought electric lighting to the village, and the Penney house continues to utilize the original knob and tube wiring, along with especially designed electric circuits that allowed the servants to control a majority of the lights from a central station. Until recently the original multi-fuel steam furnace was in use; the new furnace still utilizes the same pipes. The enameled metal tile in the upstairs bathroom is a rare wall treatment and was may have been custom made, if not enameled, by the company. Prototypes, experiments and left over parts are found scattered around the basement shop. Indeed the company warehouse was located directly behind Samuel Penney's house on Summer Street, and even before the three houses were built Samuel and Almont had transferred the property to the Company.

The town of Mechanic Falls benefitted from the presence of major rail lines and substantial water power. By the turn of the century the town had been developing its mills and industries, primarily pulp and paper products, for almost fifty years. Several large factories, including Poland Paper and the Dennison Company, provided jobs for the community as well as customers for the Penney's products. While the mill owners and managers were also successful businessmen, the majority of the houses in town were fairly common Victorian frame structures. Front porches of single family homes congregated along tree lined streets, while duplexes and apartments flanked the business district. In addition to the Victorian homes were a few colonaded or gable front, Greek Revival homes, farm houses captured by the expanding town, and here and there, a modern, four-square with restrained colonial-revival details.

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Historic photographs suggest the town was well kept and modest; a backdrop against which the Samuel Penney house was an outstanding example of high-style architecture representing wealth and status.

After Samuel Penney's death in 1946 everything passed onto his son Samuel R. Penney, Jr., who in turn placed all his assets into a trust account for his sons Harlan and Samuel R. Penney III. After Samuel Jr. died in 1969 the company transferred the house lot to Samuel Jr.'s widow Elzada, and after her death in 1986 it too was placed in the trust. In 1991 the house was sold outside of the family for the first time. However, the family and the present owners have ensured that the Samuel R. Penney house retained all the elements designed to proclaim the success of the Penneys to the early twentieth-century residents of Mechanic Falls.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is represented by the Town of Mechanic Falls tax map # 20, lot 21.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property contains all the property historically associated with the Samuel Penney House lot.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
December 30, 2001
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Exterior, south and west elevations; looking NE.

Photograph 2 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
November, 2001
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Exterior, north facade; looking SE.

Photograph 3 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
November, 2001
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Interior, parlor and entry; looking west.

Photograph 4 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
November, 2001
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Interior, main stair and stained glass window; looking west.