

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **NOV 27 1987**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Fryeburg Registry of Deeds

and or common Fryeburg Historical Society Museum

2. Location

street & number 96 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Fryeburg, N/A vicinity of

state Maine code ME county Oxford code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Fryeburg

street & number 2 Lovewell's Pond Road

city, town Fryeburg, vicinity of state Maine 04037

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Oxford County Registry of Deeds, Western District

street & number

city, town Fryeburg, state Maine 04037

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maine Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Augusta, state Maine 04333

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The (former) Fryeburg Registry of Deeds is a diminutive one-story, two-bay brick building with a gable front orientation. Its overall proportions and decorative corbeled brickwork lend the former registry a distinctive Greek Revival style appearance.

Facing northwest toward Main Street, the rectangular building, which rests on a granite foundation, features a door at the west side of the front elevation and a single six-over-six double-hung sash window to the east. Granite sills and lintels are employed at these openings as well as those on both side elevations. The facade is framed by a simple corbeled cornice and end returns comprised of two projecting brick courses. A pair of six-over-six windows are asymmetrically located on the east side elevation whereas a single window punctuates the west elevation. The corbeled cornice carries along both sides. A brick flue rises through the building's metal roof. Exterior steel reinforcement has recently been made to both side walls. In 1975 a small one-story frame addition was made to the rear of the main brick block.

The interior of the building is plainly finished with modern paneling covering the walls. A large vault stands in one corner.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1840–50 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The (former) Fryeburg Registry of Deeds is an historically important building by virtue of its function as the only nineteenth century governmental office in western Oxford County. Its architectural significance stems from the unusual representation of a clearly stated Greek Revival style composition on a building of this size and of this material.

Oxford County is one of Maine's two western-most civil units and stretches along nearly two-thirds of the state's border with New Hampshire. White settlement of the area commenced in the 1760s and rapidly expanded after the Revolution. Fryeburg itself was the first settled community, and it holds claim to being the only town in the county that has a history of pre-Revolutionary development./1 Its significance is underscored by the fact that in 1800, one year after York County was divided into two administrative districts, a registry of deeds office was established here for the convenience of recording land transactions in the northern half of the county./2

On March 4, 1805, Oxford County was created from portions of York and Cumberland counties. This action clearly indicates the rapid growth and development of the area that took place during the late eighteenth century. Immediate steps were taken to organize the governmental structure and plan for the construction of buildings at the designated "shire town" of Paris Hill./3 The county commissioners elected to maintain the registry of deeds at Fryeburg and James Osgood became the first registrar./4

There is no description in the county records about the original building that housed the Registry of Deeds in Fryeburg. However, during their October, 1821, term the commissioners made the decision to provide a more suitable facility for the Registry. Between dealing with the purchase of a stove and admitting a road petition the following entry appears:

The Court appoints William Russel, Esq. to contract for and superintend the erection of a fire proof building at Fryeburg, to be improved as an office by the Register of deeds for the Western District, and the sum of two-hundred + forty dollars is appropriated from the County Treasury for the purpose aforesaid, provided, a suitable lot of land, not less than fifty feet by one hundred, can be procured without any expense to the County, the title to which, to be in the County previous to the erection of said building./5

On September 20, 1822, a deed was executed between Daniel Clement and the inhabitants of Oxford County for a parcel of land in Fryeburg whose dimensions were approximately 48 feet by 28 feet./6 This appears to be the lot on which the existing building stands.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bennett, Randall H. Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture,
Bethel, Maine: Oxford County Historic Resource Survey, 1984.
Oxford County Commissioner's Minutes.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less Than 1

Quadrangle name Fryeburg, Maine

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	9	3	4	1	0	5	5	4	8	7	5	2	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property of less than one acre occupies the Town of Fryeburg,
Tax Map 41, Lot 55.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 1987

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *E. S. Fildes*

title S.H.P.O.

date 11/24/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Alvord Byer

National Register

date 12-30-87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

FRYEBURG REGISTRY OF DEEDS

Continuation sheet

Item number

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Although the documentary sources clearly suggest that a fireproof building, presumably of brick, was constructed about 1822, it is improbable that the existing structure with its unmistakable Greek Revival style features is the one that was authorized in 1821. Given the context of Greek Revival style architecture in Oxford County, it is reasonable to suggest that a date between 1840 and 1850 is more appropriate. This period would place the registry within the small group of brick buildings that stand in the vicinity of nearby Lovell including the Ammi Cutter House (c. 1850) and the Lovell Congregational Church (1850-51).⁷ Unfortunately, scrutiny of the commissioner's minutes failed to uncover any reference to a subsequent rebuilding of the Fryeburg registry.

This building continued to serve as the Registry of Deeds for the Western District of Oxford County until 1918. At that time a new facility was constructed on Portland Street in Fryeburg. This Colonial Revival style building continues to serve as a Registry. The former Registry was subsequently used as the Fryeburg Town Office and now is utilized by the historical society.

Endnotes

- 1 Randall H. Bennett, Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture (Bethel, Maine: Oxford County Resource Survey, 1984), p. 120, hereinafter cited as Bennett, Oxford County.
- 2 Bennett, Oxford County, p. 143.
- 3 The minutes of the first few county commissioner's meetings are almost wholly devoted to these matters. See Volume I of the bound minutes at the Oxford County Courthouse, South Paris.
- 4 Bennett, Oxford County, p. 143.
- 5 County Commissioner's Minutes, October Term, 1821, Volume I, p. 254, Oxford County Courthouse, South Paris.
- 6 Daniel Clement to Inhabitants of Oxford County, September 20, 1822, Oxford County Deeds, Office of the Registry of Deeds, Western District, Fryeburg, Volume 9, p. 334.
- 7 Bennett, Oxford County, pp. 247-48. Both the Cutter house and the Congregational Church were designed and built by the local brick mason Ammi Cutter. He is also known to have been one of two men involved with the construction of Lovell's District Seven Schoolhouse. Information on Cutter's work is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.