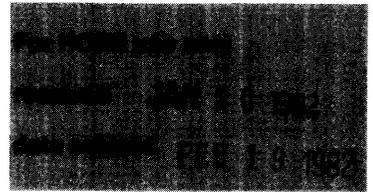


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Skowhegan Historic District

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Water and Russell Streets, and Madison Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Skowhegan N/A vicinity of congressional district Second

state Maine code 023 county Somerset code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Social</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Skowhegan, state Maine 04976

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes no

date N/A federal N/A state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" 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

The Skowhegan Historic District is a homogeneous and cohesive grouping of 38 architecturally and/or historically significant buildings dating in the main from 1880 to 1910. The district encompasses the principal commercial area of the town including the most southerly block of Madison Avenue and the two westernmost blocks of Water Street. All major styles of the period are represented and the work of one major architect, John Calvin Stevens, appears among that of other lesser known figures in the field. The buildings in general are well maintained although in some cases first floor facades have been severely altered. Nevertheless, in scale and proportion the structures are highly compatible. As a whole, the district retains its turn of the century ambience - that of a prosperous inland commercial center - quite different from such areas in coastal communities.

The boundaries of the district are delineated to include all of the commercial and related buildings of significance in the center of Skowhegan.

Buildings and sites contributing to the character of the district:

Map #

1. Municipal Building/Opera House, 1909.
John Calvin Stevens of Portland, architect
The Town of Skowhegan built the Municipal Building because Coburn Hall, the former town office, burned in 1904. Municipal uses include town meetings, selectmen's meetings, town offices. Housed the school officials. Opera House used for theater productions and lectures; Booker T. Washington, William Jennings Bryan, and William Howard Taft spoke there. Renovated 1977; new doors, elevators. Margaret Chase Smith worked there as a town employee in 1916. Her husband was a selectman.
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with stone trim.
3. Knights of Columbus Hall, 1897.
Vernacular, false front, 2 stories, wood frame.
4. Smith Whittier Block, c.1881.
Originally a bakery and confectioner's shop, possibly also a tavern.
Italianate, 3 stories, brick.
5. Brick Store Building, c.1879.
Originally a clothing store and owner's residence.
Italianate, 2 stories, brick.
7. Patten Block, possibly as early as 1836.
First owner: Joseph Patten and Samuel Weston; sold to Gustavus Drew, Hatter, 1836. Later Asael Colman's restaurant or tavern; the younger Joseph Patten published the Somerset Farmer upstairs, c.1861. Pomlow's Restaurant (and Speakeasy) 1894-1926.
Vernacular, 2 stories, wood frame.
8. Fogg Building, c.1895.
Drugstore since turn of the century.
Vernacular, 2 stories, wood frame.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 20 1982

DATE ENTERED FEB 19 1982

SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

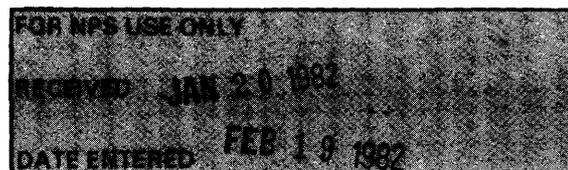
ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Map #

10. Williams Block, 1887.
Blin Williams, first owner; store and ice house.
Shoe store since turn of the century.
Vernacular, 2 stories, brick.
11. Augusta Trust Block, c.1864, 1932.
First owner, Second National Bank.
Art Deco, 2 stories, brick with stone veneer.
12. Dinsmore Block, c.1885.
First owner possible Francis Drew, early Methodist preacher and hardware merchant. A double store which has always housed a hardware store.
WEasterly part housed town's first telegraph office, 1874. F. A. Williams Hardware, 1870's, famous for finest quality steel blades, hatchets, milled in Williams foundry on Mill Street from ore out of the Canaan Bog.
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood trim.
13. Barrett Block, 1912.
First owner Timothy Barrett; home of the Bijou Theater, probably the town's first movie house. Later a restaurant and a jewelry store.
Italianate, 2 stories, wood frame.
14. Goodwin Block, c.1877.
First owners: Robert and Chandler Tuttle; possibly a store. Later owned for several years by Forrest Goodwin, local attorney, JP, member of state house and senate, and U. S. Rep. Later (1923-1946) site of Charles W. Day's grocery store.
Italianate, 3 stories, wood frame.
15. Philbrick Block, 1888.
First owner George Philbrick, jeweler; later also Philbrick Optometrist. Griffin Jewelers site during 1920's. Now William Philbrick Insurance.
Long time office of historic Kennebec Log Drive.
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with stone trim.
17. Depositors Trust, 1909.
First owner, First National Bank.
Penn Varney, Lynn, Massachusetts, Architect.
Beaux Arts Classicism, 2 stories, brick with stone facade.
18. First National Bank, c.1850, c.1890.
Consists of left hand 2 bays of building #19 with third story added and new facade. Bottom 2 stories facade changed c.1905.

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SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

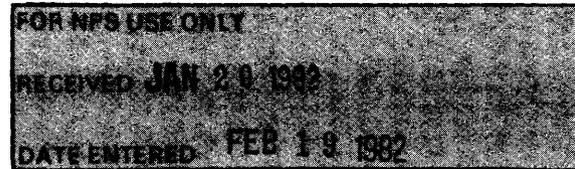
ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Map #

18. (continued....)
Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with stone facade.
19. Butler Block, c.1850
Greek Revival, 2 stories, brick with granite trim.
20. Dodge Block, c.1914.
Rebuilt after fire.
Vernacular, 2 stories, brick with stone trim.
21. Debe Block, c.1920.
First owner, Gaetano Debe. Originally restaurant and beer parlor.
1920's Vernacular, 2 stories, brick.
22. Appleby Block, c.1930.
Commercial style, 2 stories, brick.
23. Fuller Block, c. 1862.
First owner, W. H. Fuller. Dry goods and drugstore.
Colonial Revival remodelled, 2 stories, brick with wood trim.
24. Smith Block, c.1878.
First owners, J. N. and I. J. Smith, music store and sewing machines
for over 50 years.
Italianate, 2 stories, brick with wood and stone trim.
25. Griffin Block, 1870.
First owner, John Griffin
Greek Revival-Italianate, 3 stories, brick with stone trim.
26. Griffin Block (right hand 5 bays), c.1870.
Greek Revival-Italianate, 3 stories, brick with stone and wood trim.
27. Leavitt Block, c.1881.
James Leavitt, attorney, first owner. Site of earliest photo studios;
grocery store; office of Somerset Traction Company. (Old trolley
company); Lydia Dean's well-known candy making operation.
Italianate, 3 stories, wood frame
28. Block, c.1890.
Vernacular, false front, 2 stories, wood frame.
29. Block, 1882.
Italianate, false front, 2 stories, wood frame.

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SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

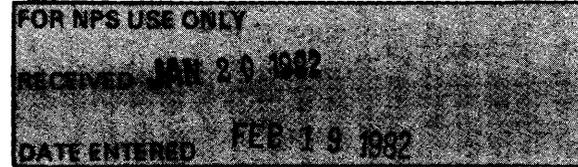
ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

Map #

30. Sampson and Griffin Block, 1908.
First owner, George Sampson. Long time site of Skowhegan's perennial corner drugstore.
Eclectic with stained glass, 2 stories, brick and masonry trim.
31. J. Palmer Merrill Block, 1908.
Originally built for the law offices of J. Palmer Merrill.
Colonial Revival, 2 stories, brick with stone and wood trim with metal crest.
33. Gray Block, c.1900.
First owner, George Gray, storekeeper.
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with stone and wood trim.
34. Merrill Block, 1905.
First owner, Folsom Merrill, attorney.
Queen Anne, 2 stories, brick with wood trim and terra cotta panel.
35. Ordway or Griffin Block, 1895.
First owner, Forrest Griffin. Site of well-known Ordway department store.
Romanesque Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood trim.
36. Griffin and Wentworth Block, 1890.
Stevens and Cobb, Portland, Architects.
Queen Anne, 3 stories, brick with wood bay and later wood additions on sides of roof.
37. A. B. Borden Block, c.1909.
Originally office and residence of Dr. A. B. Borden, optometrist.
Queen Anne, 3 stories, wood frame.
38. D. C. Robinson Block, 1898.
First owner, D. C. Robinson, Attorney.
Gothic Revival, 2 stories, wood frame.
39. Robinson Block, 1883.
Western Union Office 1883-1905.
Italianate, 2 stories, wood frame.
40. Fraternal Order of Eagles Building, 1926.
1920's Commercial, 2 stories, brick with stone trim.

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SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

Map #

41. Odd Fellows Block, c.1910.
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with wood trim.
42. Masonic Hall, 1906.
First owner, F. C. Dunlap. Purchased by Masons in 1917.
Colonial Revival, 3 stories, brick with stone and wood trim.

Non-conforming intrusions detracting from the integrity of the district:

2. Somerset Reporter Building, date unknown.
Vernacular, 1½ story, wood frame.
6. Credit Union Building, mid-20th century.
2 story, masonry.
9. Sears Building, mid-20th century.
One story, brick.
16. Woolworth Building, mid-20th century.
One story, masonry.
32. 58 Water Street, date unknown.
2 stories, wood frame, second story shingle facade.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates *Various* Builder/Architect *Various*

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In 1648, Moquine-Natahanda, son of Natowomet the Kennebec River Sachem, sold to William Bradford and his associates all the lands on both sides of the river from Cushnoc (Augusta) to Wesserunsett -- for four hogsheads of provisions, one of bread, one of pease, two cloth coats, two gallons of wine, and a bottle of strong waters. Trade, exploration, and exploitation of natural resources was already flourishing in this area in the 17th century.

The Town of Skowhegan got its start in 1771 when Peter Heywood and Joseph Weston of Concord, Massachusetts trekked up the river with their families and few head of cattle to homestead the land granted to them by the Kennebec Proprietors. The area was then known as Canaan Plantation; the town of Canaan was incorporated in 1788, as was Norridgewodk, whose boundaries then included present Skowhegan lands almost to the center of town. In 1814 the town of Milburn was separated from Canaan and included the land on the southwest side of the river. In 1823 the town of Canaan, and in 1836 changed its name to Skowhegan, which, with many variations of spelling, was the name that had been used to designate the Falls for many years. In 1861 the towns of Bloomfield and Skowhegan were united.

Up until the early 1800's most of the commercial action of the village took place on the south side of the river (Bloomfield) and on Skowhegan Island. By the time the Skowhegan Bank moved to Water Street in 1845, the present downtown area was well on its way to becoming the center of commerce. By 1870 the town's population was 3,893, and the town had acquired prominence in industries such as textiles, tanning, steel products, paper, and footwear.

The mid-1800's began a time of rapid growth and prosperity for the town. With the coming of the railroad in 1856, the telegraph in 1862, and the telephone in 1883, Skowhegan became a pivotal center for regional business and industry. It became Somerset County's shire town in 1872, and between 1880 and 1890 its population jumped from 3,869 to 5,086. Real estate trading was astonishingly active, and though several outstanding buildings in town were destroyed by fires, examples remain of the generous commercial sites provided by the prosperous merchants of the times. These buildings, for the most part, were functional brick structures in the commercial vernacular with a more or less Palladian tradition, except for a few more ornate buildings such as the Sampson Drugstore (#30) and the First National Bank (#17). The F. A. Williams store (#12), which carried the famous line of locally-manufactured blades and steel tools, is a good example of a retail site of the mid-1800's whose design serves its purpose well even today. This was the site of the first telegraph office, which later moved to the 1883 building #39, where in these quarters Eugene Seveno ran the office for over half a century in spite of a serious congenital disability.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coburn, L. H., Skowhegan on the Kennebec. Skowhegan, 1941.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 11

Quadrangle name Skowhegan

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	1 9	4 4 3 3 6 0	4 9 5 7 0 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 9	4 4 3 4 0 0	4 9 5 7 0 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 9	4 4 3 1 3 0	4 9 5 6 8 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	1 9	4 4 2 9 3 0	4 9 5 6 9 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See separate sheet.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
-------	------------	------	--------	------

state		code	county	code
-------	--	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1981

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone 207/289-2133

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Earle S. [Signature]

title S. H. P. O.

date 12/18/81

For HCERS use only

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

date 2/19/82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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DATE ENTERED	FEB 19 1982

SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

In these active years Skowhegan enjoyed a substantial if slightly eccentric reputation in the professions. It was the home of the famous Drs. Mann and Conant, the latter the inventor of the world-renowned Anidrosis vaporizer treatment. Dr. Mann had several patent remedies of his own as well as a newspaper in which he printed a column called 'The Downeast Screamer'. Dr. A. B. Borden, of the famous dairy family, whose building (#37) housed a drugstore, his office of optometry, and his wife's music school, is recalled as having stood on the corner near his store giving out straw hats to the passers-by on the occasion of his having extra money to spend from the family fortune. He is also said to have occasionally thrown all the furniture of his office out the second-story window in a fit of temper. Another optometrist of many years' standing was John Philbrick who had an office in the family building (#15) around the turn of the century. In the pharmaceutical field, Skowhegan had several reputable firms, including W. H. Fuller, who did business at his store (#23) for 40 years and who rented an upstairs office to Dr. L. A. Dascombe, the area's first car-driving MD. Other well-known pharmacies of long standing were the Sampson Drug Store (#30) and the Fogg Drug Store (#8).

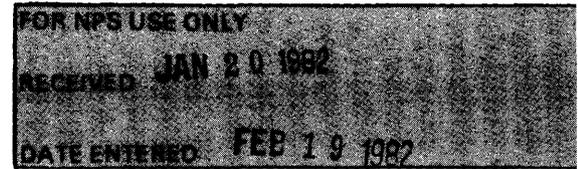
In law and politics, Skowhegan also bears historical mention. Margaret Chase Smith, U. S. Senator for many years, worked as a town employee in the Municipal Building (#1) where her fiance was a selectman. He was one of the early car dealers in town as well, and owned both the F. O. E. Building (#40) and Odd Fellows Hall (#41) before they were bought by their respective organizations. He later went on to be U. S. Representative. Forrest Goodwin, local attorney, JP, member of the state house and senate, and U. S. Representative for a year before he died (1919), had an office at 65 Water Street (#14). Other law offices in town were the Leavitt Block (#27), office of James Leavitt in the 1880's; the Merrill Block (#19), all masonry structures which reflected the confidence of the times.

Other buildings downtown suggest the variety of activities and cultural affairs going on in Skowhegan during the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. The Barrett Block (#13) housed what was probably the town's first motion-picture theater, the Bijou. The Opera House (Municipal Building) was a forum for theater productions as well as lectures by such prominent guests as Booker T. Washington, William Jennings Bryan, William Howard Taft, and the shining stars of the very active Women's Christian Temperance Union. Photographic studios occupied spaces in the Leavitt Block and the Patten building (#7), which, during its occupation by Pomlow's Restaurant, was equipped with certain interior features such as a hidden staircase and sliding room panels that accommodated it to its function as a speakeasy during Maine's long bout with prohibition beginning in the 1890's.

Though many of Skowhegan's grand architectural structures - notably its hotels and Coburn Hall - were destroyed, the buildings that do remain stand as tributes to the historical, commercial, and cultural life of this peculiar and significant settlement on the Kennebec.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



SKOWHEGAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Beginning at the southeastern corner of the Municipal Building (#1) lot, the district boundary follows the north bank of the Kennebec River westerly to the southwest corner of the Butler Building (#19) lot and follows its west line northerly, crossing Water Street, and continuing along the rear property lines of the buildings on the west side of Madison Avenue to Elm Street. The line then turns east along the south side of Elm Street, crosses Madison Avenue, and continues easterly along the south side of Russell Street to Court Street. From here it follows the rear property lines of the buildings on the north side of Water Street to the northeast corner of the Masonic Building (#42) lot, then south along its east line to Water Street which it follows easterly to the northeast corner of the Municipal Building (#1) lot and south along its easterly line to the point of beginning.

Skowhegan Historic District

District Boundary - - -

