

BURTON HALL
 Name of Property

WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
 in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: hall
 GOVERNMENT: town hall
 EDUCATION: library

RECREATION & CULTURE: hall
 GOVERNMENT: town hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
 Colonial Revival/Classical Revival

foundation: STONE
 walls: WEATHERBOARD
 roof: SLATE
 other: BRICK, METAL, GLASS

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Burton Hall, located in the hamlet of North Easton, Washington County, New York, is a wood frame edifice completed in 1901 to serve as a place of assembly for residents of the Town of Easton and as a center of local government. The building currently functions as Easton's municipal center and for a long stretch of its history also housed the town's circulating library. It is a self-contained building erected above a rectangular plan and is covered by a slate-shingled hip roof. The exterior walls are finished with horizontal clapboard, which is aligned above a board-and-batten skirt that rises to the level of the window sills; exterior finishes are simply conceived and highlighted by a simple boxed wood cornice, an associated frieze, and corner pilasters. The principal entrance, corresponding with the east-facing façade, which fronts on Route 40, is denoted by a small Neoclassical portico with a fully articulated tympanum. Windows retain original large pane six-over-six wood sash, the muntins and flanking shutters being painted green, in contrast to the uniform white of the remaining exterior wood surfaces, save for the unpainted double-leaf entrance doors and the gray-blue hue of the roofing slate. The interior is largely given over to the large auditorium with stage, the latter located on the building's west side, and there a large hand-painted stage curtain remains in place. This room, which is roughly square in plan with angled corners, has a coved ceiling and a large scroll-sawn ventilator grille occupying a central position. The eastern part of the plan is, unlike the western part, divided into an upper and lower level. At first-floor level there is a central entrance vestibule flanked by small rooms, these being the clerk's office and what was originally the library; a staircase, on the lobby's south side, provides access to an upper level that was originally given over to a kitchen and dining area, though it is now used for other purposes. Original wood, plaster and pressed metal finishes remain largely in place throughout and, as with the exterior, the interior continues to largely portray historic-period conditions. The building was designed by the prominent Saratoga Springs-based architect R. Newton Brezee and erected under the auspices of local contractor-builder Horace Dodds, a resident of nearby Center Cambridge.

Narrative Description

Location & Setting

The nominated property is located on the west side of New York Route 40, north of that road's intersection with Wells Road-Vly Summit Road, and south of Sarles Ferry Road, in the hamlet of North Easton, Washington County, New York. The rectangular-plan building is situated with its longer elevations facing north and south, the principal entrance being situated on the east-facing façade and approached by means of a short concrete walkway. Burton Hall is situated opposite the town library, located on the east side of Route 40, and is set amidst a number of noteworthy properties, among them the Swain-Starbuck tavern, built ca. 1790, and the birthplace of engineer George Henry Corliss, inventor of the Corliss steam engine, which is the next dwelling south of Burton Hall, beyond the parking area. The setting is characterized by a small cluster of buildings aligned in linear fashion to either side of the north-south course of Route 40; to the east rise wooded hills, while the western view-shed looks across cultivated fields towards Saratoga County, on the opposite side of the Hudson River, the Adirondack foothills looming distantly to the northwest. A large unpaved parking lot is situated on the building's south side, where a building once stood, while the remaining area around the building is planted with grass and largely unembellished with manipulated landscape features. There is a slight drop off in grade moving from east to west on the parcel, which accounts for the partial exposure of the foundation towards the building's west side.

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Exterior

The building, of light frame construction and erected over a mortared stone foundation, is a single-story construct with a rectangular footprint and hipped roof. Exterior walls on all four elevations were sheathed, from foundation to window sill level, with a board-and-batten skirt, above which (to frieze level) is horizontal clapboard. The walls are terminated by a moulded frieze and boxed cornice, which gives way to the slate-covered roof. The building is three bays wide by five bays deep, the entrance being symmetrically composed. Window openings are trimmed with plain casings with drip caps, and the openings have corresponding battened wood shutters.

Fenestration on the east-facing façade consists of a central entrance with corresponding portico, which is flanked to either side by tall windows fitted with large-pane six-over-six wood sash. The entrance is fitted with double-leaf pine doors of a glazed and paneled type, these being spanned by a four-light transom and all contained within a simple wood enframingent. The portico consists of square posts, two freestanding and two engaged, and a fully articulated frieze, cornice and tympanum. The eastern-facing portion of the frieze is fitted with a painted panel that reads "1901 BURTON HALL 1901," painted in gold against a black background; this sign appears in a photograph taken on the day of the building's dedication. Corner pilasters with moulded capitals are present at the corners and correspond with the clapboarded portions of the walls; above them, encircling the building, is a simple frieze with architrave moulding and, above that, a boxed and moulded cornice.

The south-facing elevation has four large and one small window openings—the larger ones matching those on the façade, in addition to an entrance, which is situated between the third and fourth window, moving east to west, and which was added ca. 1926 to comply with state code regulations. This entrance is fitted with narrow double-leaf six panel doors and shielded beneath a pent hood with corresponding wood posts, concrete steps, and pipe railing. The smaller window, the westernmost one, corresponds with a staircase accessing the stage and is fitted with two-over-two wood sash. A chimney rises from the roofline, between the first and second bays moving westward, and a galvanized metal ventilator is present on the roof ridge. The foundation becomes more visible towards the southwest corner; it consists of roughly dressed stone bedded in mortar, and includes a small opening fitted with a hinged wood panel. The north-facing elevation is all but identical in conception and execution, though more of the stone foundation is visible on this side.

A portion of the rear elevation is aligned by a pent-roofed projection, the walls of which are covered with both clapboard and novelty siding, the roof being covered with corrugated metal. This feature appears to have replaced the original privies, which were accessed by way of the dressing rooms on the stage and which were expressed as small bump-outs on either side of the rear exterior wall. Fenestration includes an at-grade door above which are three evenly spaced windows.

Interior

The principal entrance from the Route 40 side of the building leads into a central vestibule. To the left (south) of the vestibule is located the Easton clerk's office—a corresponding frosted-glass window in the wall between the two allows for the dispensation of business—and to the right is the former library, which presently functions as a kitchen and dining area. Both rooms have wood strip flooring, which is found throughout the interior, in addition to plaster walls and embossed metal ceilings with egg-and-dart cornices. The library additionally retains two wood cupboards that may be original to ca. 1901. A galley window has been cut into the west wall of the library in order to provide direct communicate with the auditorium, an alteration reflecting the use of this room as a kitchen following the cessation of the library function in 1949. As for the vestibule,

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which has walls of high beaded-board wainscot and plaster, its north wall has display cabinets in which Easton memorabilia is displayed. Original doors remain throughout the interior and are of a six-panel type with butt hinges and mortise locks with lathe-turned wood knobs. Like most all of the remaining interior woodwork, which was similarly fashioned from pine, these are deeply stained and varnished. The staircase to the upper rooms is aligned, at upper landing level, by the original turned newel post and associated handrail and square balusters. These two rooms, in addition to a smaller storage room, retain their original configuration and finishes, save for an acoustic tile ceiling installed in the larger room, the former dining room. The original kitchen area retains a thimble indicating where a cook stove was once vented. The space on this level is now dedicated to official town functions.

Occupying the rear portion of the plan is the large auditorium, the associated stage of which is located against the rear (west) wall. The auditorium, exclusive of the roughly 14' deep stage, is roughly 38' square, its corners angled so as to create an octagonal plan. In these angled corners were located, on the east side, chimneys and, on the west side, stairs that lead upward onto the stage. Wainscot consisting of vertical beaded board aligns the perimeter of the room to window sill level, above which is plaster finish. Acoustic tiles are installed on the uppermost flat portion of the ceiling, within which is centered the scroll-sawn vent. The proscenium arch is rectangular in shape with rounded upper corners and is fitted with a hand painted, oil-on-canvas stage curtain that is partially unfurled. It depicts a lake scene with a mill and houses and is signed by the artist, "D. Walsh." To either side of the stage are the box staircases with corresponding six-panel doors, accounting for the difference in height between floor and stage level. Both rear corners of the stage are occupied by small changing rooms, formed of vertical wood boards with moulded cornices through which the bathrooms are accessed. The present bathrooms appear to have replaced the original privies and have beaded-board wall and ceiling finish.

At the rear of the stage is stairway that leads downward to basement level. The easternmost portion of the stage was excavated at a later date in order to accommodate the installation of central heating. Framing components, where visible, are circular-sawn hemlock.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ART

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

ca. 1901- 1965

Significant Dates

ca. 1901-02; ca. 1926

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brezee, R. Newton; architect

Dodds, Horace; contractor-builder

Walsh, D.; stage curtain painter

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 grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the construction of the building and is carried forward to the fifty-year cut off given its continuous use as a municipal facility and place of public assembly.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Burton Hall has been a building of exceptional importance to the Town of Easton since its completion in 1901. Long the nexus of social, educational and political activity in the town, this building was constructed through the philanthropy of lifelong Easton resident Isaac A. Burton, who generously financed its construction. In 1900 Burton, a retired banker and farmer, offered the town \$5,000 to fund the erection of a mixed-use building to serve as a place of assembly for Easton residents and as the center of town government, mandating only that the town make small interest payments on the sum during his lifetime; he additionally pledged monies for the town's library, which was to be contained therein. Burton, whose failing health did not allow him to attend the dedication ceremony in September 1901, died in December 1902, thereby freeing the town from its financial obligation to him. Judge Thomas Lillie, a speaker at the dedication ceremony, reminded Easton residents of Burton's generosity and implored them "to keep the hall always open for the uses which he [Burton] intended it."¹ Burton Hall was designed by Saratoga Springs-based architect R. Newton Brezee (1851-1929), a preeminent architectural practitioner in this era, and built by local carpenter Horace Dodds of Center Cambridge, and it remains in large measure as constructed at that time, notwithstanding minor modifications made in 1926 and more recently. It served from 1901 until 1949 as the location of the town's circulating library, until a new building was erected, directly across Route 40, to serve that function. Burton Hall has since the time of its completion offered itself for a wide range of purposes, among them various entertainments, Grange events, and local business, political and social meetings, in addition to more conventional town functions such as the principal meeting place of local government and as a polling place. It continues to serve as the focal point of town government and it is there that court proceedings and other town business are dispensed. Architecturally, Brezee's design for the exterior was executed in a manner which affiliates it with Neoclassical and Colonial Revival impulses. The interior layout allowed for a large space for public assembly in addition to areas dedicated to town functions, among them the circulating library and the clerk's office. Few buildings, if any, can speak as ably to the history of Easton since 1900 as Burton Hall, given the direct association between it and various facets of local life and its continuing function in the manner intended by its erectors. The building is being nominated in the local context in association with Criterion A and C, in the areas of Architecture, Art, and Social History. Significance in the area of Art is being invoked given the survival of an early, if not original, stage curtain. It remains an important legacy of Isaac Burton's philanthropy to Easton and shares considerable associations with the community's history in the years after 1900.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Overview

The lands within the present-day Town of Easton, located in southwest Washington County and bordering the east bank of the Hudson River, were originally part of the Saratoga Patent, which was first granted in 1684 and confirmed in 1708. This patent, which included lands in this region which bounded the Hudson River on both its east and west sides, had previously served as hunting grounds for the Mohawk Indians. It is thought that the site of the first Fort Saraghtoga, built in 1709 and the first-known settlement in present-day Washington County, was situated in the Town of Easton, south of the Battenkill River and near its confluence with the Hudson River. The first undisputed historical record of settlement states that Killian de Ridder purchased from the original patentees a tract of land that included large portions of what is now Easton in 1730; it is doubtful, however, that de Ridder settled his lands until many decades later, for this land was located in an area crossed many times by armies in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, in the pre-Revolutionary period a handful of Dutch families settled along the Hudson River—the northernmost extent of the Dutch cultural hearth centered in Albany—while a large contingent of Quakers settled in the southeastern part of the town. Easton's name is derived from its position in the larger Saratoga Patent; it was the "East town" within the

¹"Burton Hall dedicated in Easton," information included in "Our Century" column, *The Salem Press*, 7 January 1999.

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patent, separated from the remaining acreage of the patent by the Hudson River. It was included within the bounds of Albany County until 1791, at which time it became a part of Washington County.

The events of the American Revolution directly impacted Easton's early residents, particularly during the year 1777, which witnessed the defeat of British General John Burgoyne's forces at the Battle of Saratoga, waged directly across the Hudson River in present-day Saratoga County. Prior to their defeat in October 1777, a detachment from Burgoyne's army had crossed lands now contained within Easton on their way to attack Bennington, Vermont, which ended in defeat in a battle staged near Walloomsac, New York. It was likewise in 1777 that an Indian raiding party from Burgoyne's force had a memorable confrontation with Easton Quakers, known in traditional accounts as the "Fierce Feathers" story. The cessation of the war brought with it a new sense of stability and greater security in the legitimacy of titles to land, which helped stimulate settlement and growth. Easton was formally incorporated as a town in 1789. The first settlers were soon joined by others, among them many New Englanders; these included Rhode Island Baptists, who settled the northern part of the town, and families from coastal Massachusetts. The primary economic activity was and remains agriculture, and the lands within the town's bounds were considered excellent for tillage. Agriculture followed a characteristic progression for the river valleys of eastern New York, from cereal grain cultivation to, ultimately, dairying, which remains the focus of contemporary agriculture in Easton.

Burton Hall is located in North Easton, a hamlet known earlier in its history as Easton Corners and before that as Starbuck's Corners, which has long been a center of business and social activity in the town. The hamlet emerged as Easton's center of commerce at any early date, situated on the post road linking Troy and Whitehall, and there a post office, the first in town, was early on established. By the latter 1870s there were two churches, one Methodist and one Reformed Dutch, located in North Easton and additionally carriage, blacksmith and harness-makers shops, a store, a hotel, and about 25 dwellings.² Burton Hall is one of two important buildings erected for residents in North Easton during the first half of the twentieth century, the other being the town library, built in 1949 and still in service today.

Burton Hall

Burton Hall was erected through the largesse of Easton citizen Isaac A. Burton (1829-1902). In August 1900 a local newspaper reported that Burton had pledged monies to the town for the construction of the building:

Isaac A. Burton has offered the town of Easton \$5,000 for the erection of a town hall. He makes the offer conditional that the interest on that sum at five percent shall be paid to him during his life. A special town meeting has been called to vote on its acceptance.³

A lifelong resident of Easton born in the southwestern part of that town, Burton was the eldest son of Simon and Eda Beadle Burton and was educated in the local academies at Greenwich and Cambridge. He was long associated with the First National Bank of Greenwich, of which he served variously as a president and director. At the time of his passing in 1902 he was described as having had "the highest esteem of his associates as an upright and useful citizen," and as "a man of genial, kindly nature... his generosity attested by his recent gift to his town, Burton Hall."⁴ While engaged in banking and business endeavors, he listed his occupation in the Federal censuses of 1880 and 1900 as "farmer." In his will Burton bequeathed considerable monies to any number of local institutions and organizations in this part of Washington County. These gifts included \$1,000 for the Reformed Church of Greenwich and the remaining churches in that village— excepting the Catholic church, to which he left \$500; \$1,500 to each of the churches in Easton; and \$500 to the Sylvia hook & ladder

² Crisfield Johnson, *History of Washington County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts & Ensign, 1878), 294.

³ *The County Post*, Easton news items, 31 August 1900.

⁴ "Burton Hall," 7 January 1999.

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fire company in Greenwich, which had been named for his sister, Sylvia Burton. As for his interests in the First National Bank, he devised these to Thomas J. Eldridge.⁵

Burton additionally pledged \$1,000 to Easton towards the furtherance of its circulation library, which was to be installed in the building upon completion, both of these offers being accepted by the town government. The library was established in 1879 as the Easton Library Association by Lucy Allen and Francis Mitchell, who together ran the Friend's seminary in Easton. Its genesis was the book collection of the seminary, which was opened for public use on alternating Fridays, during which time student readings and debates were conducted. The closing of the seminary left the library without a home, and it was maintained in various private households until being installed in Burton Hall.⁶

Assistance in paying the interest on the \$2,500 advanced by Burton to the town was made by Washington County, which in November 1900 appropriated \$33.39 for that purpose, in addition to \$50 for the Easton library.⁷

In 1901 the new building was completed and dedicated. Unfortunately Burton's poor health did not allow him to attend the September 1901 dedication ceremony, a period overview of which follows:

EASTON TOWN HALL DEDICATED

A concourse of 500 people congregated at Burton Hall in Easton, Wednesday, to listen to the exercises of dedication of the new town hall. Owing to illness the donor, Isaac Burton, was unable to be present. The programme opened with a selection by Orcutt's orchestra, J. Warren Fort then introduced Judge Thomas Lillie, of Whitehall, who paid a fine tribute to Mr. Burton as one of the greatest benefactors Easton has ever seen. Judge Joseph Potter sent a letter of regret, owing to illness he was unable to be present. One was also received from Judge Fursman, who had a previous engagement. George Orcutt sang a solo. Lawyer Ostrander, of Schuylerville, delivered an able address, brief and to the point. Rev. James C. Mitchell made a very pleasing address, which was followed by a solo by Luke Nichols. F.O. Ives was then called forward and delivered an address. Attention was called to the fine library which has been moved into its new home, and of which the town has just cause to be proud. Mr. Burton also made the following offer: That if the Easton free library be moved to the hall and left there undisturbed, he would donate \$1,000, which the state would duplicate, as the library is under the regent's jurisdiction. This offer was also accepted, and Mrs. Howard Cornell was appointed librarian to assist Mrs. Fred J. Taylor, resigned. Books may be had on the afternoons of Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. A unanimous vote of thanks was also given to Mr. Burton. The exercises were then closed with the singing of "America." In the evening a large crowd assembled and enjoyed dancing.⁸

Thomas Lillie, who served eight years as a Washington County judge, made reference to "that grand old man, Mr. Burton" during the course of his comments, a mention which was greeted with enthusiastic applause. He then urged those in attendance and the people of Easton to "keep the hall always open for the uses which [Burton] intended it."⁹ This included the building functioning, for nearly half a century, as the town's library, a use discontinued with the construction of the present library in 1949, which was necessitated by the need for additional space.

⁵ "Will of Isaac A. Burton," *The Schuylerville Standard*, 15 January 1903.

⁶ "Easton Library 92 Years Old," *The Greenwich Journal and Salem Press*, 8 July 1971.

⁷ County appropriations as noted in *The County Post*, 23 November 1900.

⁸ *Troy Daily Times*, 13 September 1901.

⁹ "Burton Hall," 7 January 1999.

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Burton Hall has hosted a vast array of programs and “entertainments” during the course of its history, many of which raised small but valuable funds for local enterprises. These have included theatrical productions, dances, dinners and balls, minstrel shows, art and antique shows, and lectures. Scores of local newspaper accounts confirm that Easton citizen’s quickly seized upon the presence of the new venue and put Burton’s gift to good use, as the community now boasted a dedicated place of assembly. These programs were often times locally produced and typically featured local talent, though other communities also put on performances there. For instance, a 1921 play, “Aboard the 5:15 for Easton,” was “to be given by talent from Stillwater,” from adjacent Saratoga County. A promotion for this event noted that “the Stillwater people have proved their ability to please an Easton audience in the past.”¹⁰ Among those events held in the earliest years of Burton Hall’s history was a 1901 operetta entitled “The Merry Milk Maids,” given by young members of the local Methodist church, which followed a similar production given by the youth of the Cambridge Methodist church some time before.¹¹ In January 1902 it was reported that “the largest audience in Burton Hall since its completion was packed in that room last Friday evening.” The occasion was a production put on by “the women of Easton” entitled “The Old Maid’s Convention,” which was described as an event of “great merriment” at which “many local ‘hits’ were made, which convulsed the audience with laughter.”¹² Other notable events of 1902 included a “Washington Social,” a country supper held in honor of George Washington’s birthday, which drew 115 attendees, and a lecture by Florence Fenwick Miller, “Woman’s Position; Past, Present, Prospective.” Miller, of London, England, was a delegate to the International Woman Suffrage Association and had been invited to speak at Burton Hall by the Easton Political Equality Club.¹³ Many of the early theatrical productions were put on by the Easton Young People’s Club, which in December 1901 was, according to a news account, planning a “grand entertainment” which it was hoped would “outdo all the former attempts.” A masquerade ball was also being planned at that time.¹⁴

Dances were common during the early decades of the building’s history, such as that conducted in February 1928 by “the younger set,” were a tradition carried forward with square dances in more recent times.¹⁵ Among those musicians who provided music for dances at Burton Hall early in its history was George F. Orcutt, leader of Orcutt’s orchestra, which played in Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington counties in this era. In 1904 Orcutt’s band, then based out of Mechanicville and previously Cambridge, consisted of Orcutt on cornet; Edward Root on piano; A.L. Smodell, first violin; John Vinchayne, clarinet; and A. Vrooman on drums.¹⁶ Other bands that are documented as having performed there included Nichols’ Orchestra, in the 1910s; Chick Charlestream and his Bluebird Orchestra, which played there in the early 1930s and which was active in this decade in Saratoga and Washington counties; and, in the 1940s, Tex Carney and his Roamin’ Sage Pals.

In addition to these various social events, any number of local, regional, state and national organizations conducted business meetings at Burton Hall, many of which were associated with agriculture, the lifeblood of many Easton residents. Among those groups that met there were the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Easton Grange chapter and related “juvenile grange,” the Tri-County Holstein club, the Farmer’s Institute, the Dairyman’s League, the New England Milk Producers Association, the local Republican caucus, the Washington County Historical Society, and the Easton Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Additionally, Burton Hall offered itself as a central home for the affairs of town government and has served as a polling place for

¹⁰Ibid., 18 November 1921.

¹¹*The Schuylerville Standard*, 18 December 1901.

¹²Ibid., 22 January 1902.

¹³Ibid., 26 February 1902.

¹⁴Ibid., 18 December 1901.

¹⁵*The Saratogian*, 22 February 1928.

¹⁶*Hudson Valley Times* (Mechanicville), 26 October 1904.

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area residents, functions it continues to assume to this day. It has long been a building with a central role in the life and vitality of this rural Washington County community.

Burton Hall was closed briefly in July 1926, by order of the State Police, due to its failure to comply with the state building code, and specifically due to issues with access and egress. “The reason for the closing... is that it is not considered a safe place for the assemblage of large meetings,” it was noted in *The Salem Press*, “and the notice to the town authorities specifies certain changes must be made before the building was reopened.” Among the changes mandated by state authorities was the insertion of a new exit—that cut into the south elevation—in addition to the installation of fire extinguishers and other safety measures.¹⁷

Architectural Analysis

Burton Hall was designed by architect Robert Newton Brezee, who was otherwise known as R. Newton Brezee. A native of Schoharie County, New York, born in Middleburg in 1851, Brezee worked as a carpenter prior to opening an architectural office in Saratoga Springs during the mid-1880s. In 1890 he was advertising himself as an architect with offices in the Putnam Building on Broadway. Brezee’s work is closely associated with Saratoga Springs, as there he produced plans for any number of houses and public buildings, these being largely cast in the prevailing architectural idioms of the turn-of-the-twentieth century period, among them the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Neoclassical styles. Any number of large-scale, architecturally sophisticated houses built in the fashionable neighborhoods of Saratoga Springs’s east side attest to both his popularity and proficiency as an architect. The following passage is drawn from a 1929 obituary and indicates the respect with which he was held locally:

R. NEWTON BREZEE DEAD

Well known architect of Saratoga Springs—77 Years Old

R. Newton Brezee, one of the best-known professional men in Saratoga Springs for many years, died suddenly Monday evening... Although he had been in ill health for many years, his sudden death came as a shock to his wide acquaintanceship in the city... Coming to Saratoga Springs, when about sixteen years of age, he had made his home practically since that time, with the exception of seven years spent in Garden City, L.I.¹⁸

Brezee’s association with the Easton project is confirmed by a set of original blueprints, along with a subsequent design amendment, maintained in the records of the town. No other correspondence or construction documents have otherwise been identified, and it does not appear that his connection with the project is widely known. Burton Hall was a purpose-built building designed to satisfy a specific set of mandates, among them as a place of public assembly, as the home of the town’s circulating library, and as the center of local government. A portion of the plan on the east side was given over the functions of circulating library and town business, disposed of on two levels, beyond which opens the large auditorium with stage. The original plan did not call for an upper level of space, which was instead added subsequently to the plans by way of an amendment drawn by Brezee. The design is relatively sedate by Late Victorian standards, characterized on the exterior by the building’s simple, self-contained volume and restrained detailing of Neoclassical derivation. It offers itself as a reserved counterpart to the architect’s more exuberant work, though modest parallels can be drawn in comparing Burton Hall with Brezee’s School No. 4 on Spring Street, Saratoga Springs, ca. 1900, a brick masonry building which exhibits relatively austere Neoclassical treatments.

¹⁷“Easton’s Town Hall Closed by the State,” *The Salem Press*, 22 July 1926.

¹⁸“R. Newton Brezee Dead,” *Ballston Spa Daily Journal*, 18 April 1929.

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WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK

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Horace Dodds (1838-1925), a local contractor-builder, was responsible for Burton Hall's erection.¹⁹ A resident of the adjacent Town of Cambridge, at the time of 1870 Federal census Dodds, then 32 years old, noted his profession as carpenter; by the time of the 1900 census, he listed his profession as "contractor." Small news items from local newspapers indicate some of his building activity, including the construction of a house at Buskirk for Edward Chase, ca. 1898, in association with his son, Herbert, who presumably learned the carpenter's trade from him.²⁰ In addition to his work in the building trades, Dodds was sometime secretary of the Cambridge Cooperative Fire Insurance Company, established in 1857.

The stage curtain, which is signed "D. Walsh," is presumed to be an early, if not original, installation. It depicts an expansive outdoor scene, with a lake framed by distant mountains, the foreground occupied by houses and a grist mill to which men are bringing bags of grain by boat. Curtains such as this were a typical feature of rural theatres and grange halls and were often painted by itinerant artists. Some, like that at Burton Hall, depicted scenic view sheds, sometimes of local inspiration, while others served as advertisements for local businesses. While the artist responsible for the curtain has yet to be researched, it remains an important feature of Burton Hall and one vital to understanding the building's use as a venue for local productions and entertainments.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

¹⁹"Burton Hall Dedicated," *Troy Daily Times*, 5 September 1901.

²⁰*Washington County Post*, 16 September 1898; "In Days of Yore," *Ibid.*, 13 May 1943.

BURTON HALL
Name of Property

WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Johnson, Crisfield. *History of Washington County, New York*. Philadelphia: Everts & Ensign, 1878.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .83 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>618110</u> Easting	<u>4763041</u> Northing	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for this NRHP nomination is depicted on the three maps included with this documentation, which were drawn at a scale of 1:24,000, 1:12,000 and 1:4,000, and all of which are entitled "Burton Hall, Easton, Washington Co., NY."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary has been drawn to correspond with the current legal boundary for the property and reflects historic conditions.

BURTON HALL

Name of Property

WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Krattinger
organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation date April 2015
street & number PO Box 189, Peebles Island State Park telephone (518) 268-2167
city or town Waterford State NY zip code 12188
e-mail William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Photographs by William E. Krattinger, September 2014
TIFF file format; original digital files maintained at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Peebles Island State Park

- 0001 EXTERIOR, perspective view looking westward towards east and south elevations
- 0002 EXTERIOR, south elevation, view looking to northwest
- 0003 EXTERIOR, south and west elevations, view looking to northeast
- 0004 EXTERIOR, detail view of front entrance doors, east elevation
- 0005 INTERIOR, town clerk's window
- 0006 INTERIOR, original town library room
- 0007 INTERIOR, auditorium, view looking west towards stage
- 0008 INTERIOR, auditorium, view looking towards south and east walls
- 0009 INTERIOR, detail view of south stage stairs
- 0010 INTERIOR, detail view of characteristic door architrave

Property Owner:

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

name Town of Easton, c/o Town Supervisor Dan Shaw
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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Schuylerville, NY
Quadrangle

SCHUYLERVILLE
Quadrangle

Burton Hall

SCHAGHTICOKE
Quadrangle

616000 617000 618000 619000 620000

4765000
4764000
4763000
4762000
4761000

4765000
4764000
4763000
4762000
4761000

1:24,000
1 in = 2,000 ft

Copyright: © 2013 National Geographic Society

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 Burton Hall



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Schuylerville, NY
Quadrangle



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 Burton Hall



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



BURTON HALL 1891

EASTON TOWN HALL
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
PUBLIC HEARINGS



A white, single-story building with horizontal siding and a grey shingled roof. The building features a central entrance with a small porch and a white door. To the right of the entrance is a large window with dark green shutters. Further right is another large window with dark green shutters. A blue handicapped parking sign is visible near the porch. The building has a brick chimney and a cupola on the roof. The building is situated on a gravel area with a grassy patch in front.

♿



ITXU 103060 33
22G1
MAX GROSS WEIGHT 6800 KG
TARE 2200 KG
PAYLOAD 4600 KG
CUBIC CAP 67

1071

OPEN

NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2015
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
1071 W. MAIN ST., EASTON, VT
ADMISSION IS FREE

NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2015
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
1071 W. MAIN ST., EASTON, VT
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ADMISSION IS FREE



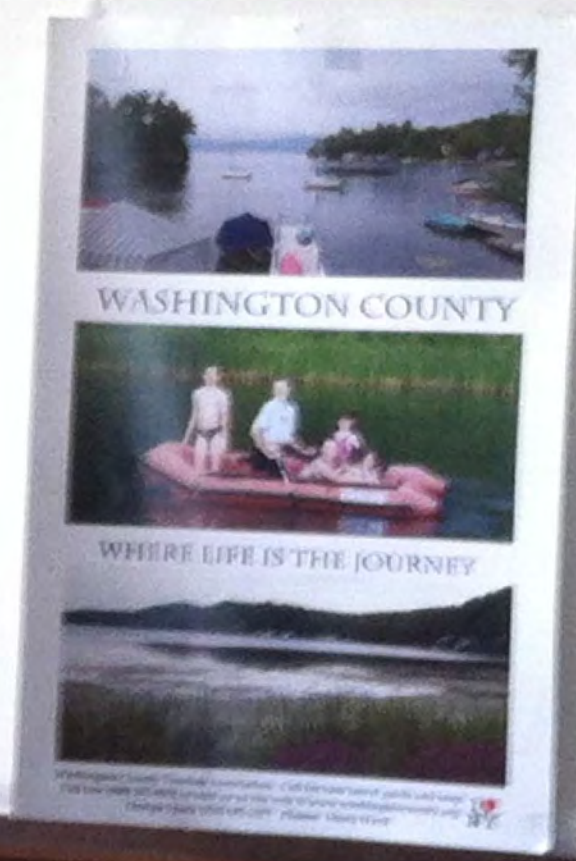
EASTON
NIGHT ON
IN FORCE
DEPARTMENT OF
West Hill
& Museum
761-6580 746-2400

EASTON
200
TOWN
1789
OF





BEFORE LEAVING
PLEASE
1. LOCK THE DOOR
2. TURN OFF THE LIGHTS
3. TURN OFF THE TV
4. TURN OFF THE RADIO
5. TURN OFF THE PHONE
6. TURN OFF THE COMPUTER
7. TURN OFF THE FAN
8. TURN OFF THE HEATER
9. TURN OFF THE AIR CONDITIONER
10. TURN OFF THE WATER





FIRE
EXTINGUISHER

STOP

PLEASE
DO NOT
SMOKE
OR
DRINK
ALCOHOL
OR
USE
DRUGS
OR
OTHER
SUBSTANCES
WHILE
ON
DUTY
OR
IN
THE
OFFICE
AREA
THANK
YOU

Handwritten notes and a calendar on the wall.





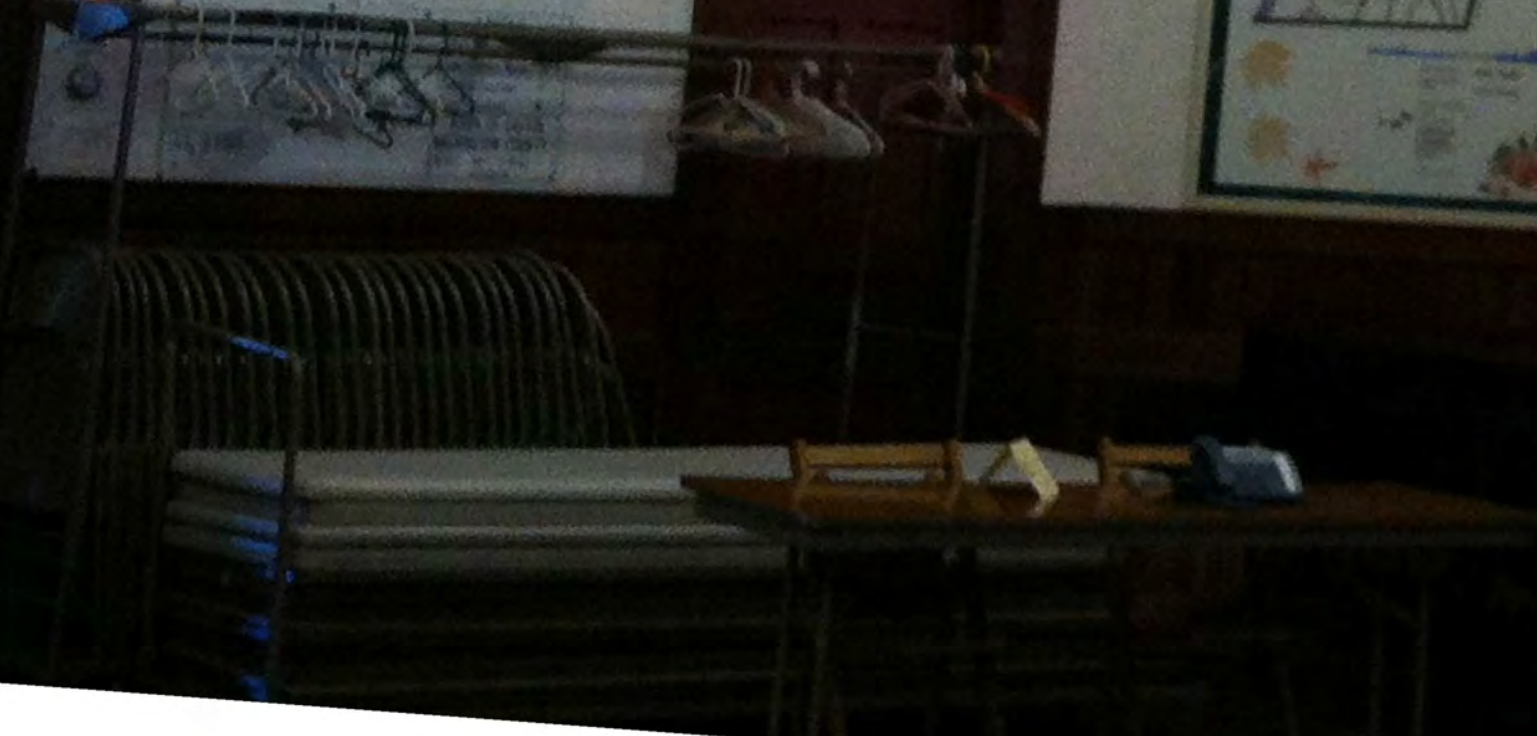


TOWN OF EASTON
BUSINESSES AND FARMS



EXIT

EXIT




BATH ROOMS





JUSTICE COURT

Easton
Town Court
→
Mag Court

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Burton Hall

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Washington

DATE RECEIVED: 8/07/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/28/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/14/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/22/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000610

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.17.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Local Governments
Racing and Wagering
Small Business
Tourism, Parks, Arts
and Sports Development

CARRIE WOERNER
Assemblywoman 113th District
Saratoga County
Washington County

Ruth Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188

Subject: Burton Hall, Easton NY - National Register Nomination

May 25, 2015

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I have reviewed the nomination form for Burton Hall, located in Easton NY, and this nomination has my unqualified support. The building retains its historic character, both exteriorly and interiorly, and continues to be used as it was originally intended: as an assembly building for the community. The building has been an integral part of the community's past, and it is representational of the role public assembly buildings have played and continue to play in rural communities. Regionally significant, the architect, R. Newton Brezee, was responsible for the design of many residential, commercial and public buildings in Saratoga Springs and throughout Saratoga and Washington counties. It is my belief that adding Burton Hall to the State and National Registers of Historic Places will help protect this building for future generations, serving as a reminder of the history of Washington County and Easton and as a fine representation of the architecture of the early 20th century.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this nomination, and hope that the Board will give strong consideration to its merits.

Best regards,

Carrie Woerner
Member of Assembly
113th District
Saratoga & Washington Counties





**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

AUG - 7 2015

**Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service**

24 July 2015

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following three nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

West Side Unitarian Church – Congregation Ramath Orah, New York County
First Presbyterian Church Complex, St. Lawrence County
Burton Hall, Washington County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office