

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park 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 Captain Josiah E. Chase Octagon House

and or common

2. Location

street & number Chase's Mill Road not for publication

city, town East Limington, vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county York code 031

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. & Mrs. Wilmont M. Schwind, Jr.

street & number 17 East Main Street

city, town Yarmouth, vicinity of state Maine 04096

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number

city, town Alfred, state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X 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

Standing on a shallow knoll near the Saco River and sheltered by tall oak trees, the Captain Josiah E. Chase Octagon House retains much of its rural ambiance. The two-story frame building, with Italianate-style details, is capped by an octagonal roof that is crowned by a cupola. The Chase house is composed of eight elevations of equal size, each of which is sheathed in clapboards. Wide paneled pilasters at each corner rise from the granite foundation to an entablature with a deep cornice originally detailed with modillion blocks.

The principal entrance elevation faces west, opposite from the meadow which separates the house from the nearby river. Its heavily molded four-panel door is framed by narrow sidelights. An early twentieth century documentary photograph of the house shows that at one time a flat roofed porch supported by a pair of Doric columns and crowned by a balustrade shielded this entrance. A pair of four-over-four double-hung sash windows are located on the second story.

Both elevations flanking the entrance feature three-sided bay windows on the first story and paired four-over-four windows above. The bays themselves have a single six-over-six window between two smaller four-over-four sash and a cornice with modillion blocks.

The pattern of paired sash on the second story continues around the house. A similar arrangement is employed in the first story of four of the five remaining elevations. A second entrance at the rear is both similar to and on axis with the front entry. It retains the entablature with modillion blocks but does not appear to have had the distinctive porch.

Eight roof planes, two of which have early skylights and one punctuated by a flue, rise to the cupola. Its features include small four-over-four windows with segmentally arched upper sash, an entablature with modillion blocks and a flat roof with a thin wooden spire.

On the interior, the rooms are organized around a dramatic central hall with a separate flight of stairs in both the front and rear half. The two flights of stairs meet at a single wide interstory landing and then separate once again at the second floor. A large turned newel post and a curving handrail supported by turned balusters are employed in the main hall. The secondary rear hall contains a slightly less ornate balustrade.

To the left and right of the main entrance hall large six-panel pocket doors, framed by symmetrically molded surrounds, conceal the front rooms. Behind the triangular room on the south side of the house is the rectangular dining room with a corner closet, and behind this room is the kitchen. The door which opened from the hall into the kitchen has been enclosed. On the north side two interior walls were removed in the 1970s leaving a single very expansive space.

In the original plan there were seven rooms on the second floor, four of which had a triangular configuration. The arrangement is intact with the exception of the elimination of one wall in the north side of the house. An enclosed staircase leads

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

CAPTAIN JOSIAH E. CHASE OCTAGON HOUSE

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 2

from the back of the hall to the attic where a handsome freestanding stair rises to the cupola. There are, in addition, two small rooms in this attic space. The walls and ceilings throughout the interior are of plaster over lath construction.

The house has a full basement which is entered from an interior stair located in the rear hall as well as through an exterior bulkhead on the south elevation. Within the basement is a cistern, some ductwork from the early wood fired central heating plant and a perimeter brick facing over granite, approximately three feet in width, which extends from the sills to the granite base.

Immediately to the south of the house is a two-story barn sheathed in clapboards. It retains the large entrance door on the front elevation and a number of additional openings on the front and sides. The barn appears to be a contemporary of the dwelling.

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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

Specific dates	ca. 1858	Builder/Architect	Unknown
----------------	----------	-------------------	---------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Captain Josiah E. Chase Octagon House is among the most architecturally significant and least altered of Maine's twelve known surviving octagonal buildings. Its unique architectural form links the house to the theories of design espoused by Orson Squire Fowler and published in his book A Home For All or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building New, Cheap, Convenient, and Adapted to Rich and Poor (1853). The house was built soon after 1858 for Josiah Elden Chase (1819-1898), a sea captain and a member of the locally prominent Chase family.

Born in Cohocton, New York, Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887) attended Amherst College and subsequently established himself as an authority on the science of phrenology. His most notable achievement, however, was as author of a Home For All. First published in 1848, the book went through a number of subsequent reprints. Fowler's theories about exterior form and the arrangement of interior space were radical departures from the traditional American house. So too were his ideas concerning the material for construction, principally a gravel wall, and the many internal features including toilets and water collection cisterns. Many of Fowler's ideas had been expressed in his own home built in Fishkill, New York.

Ultimately, however, the octagon house form gained only limited acceptance. Many octagons undoubtedly suffered extensive later alterations, especially to the unusual but somewhat restrictive plans. Those that survive in a relatively unaltered state, therefore, assume increased significance in the history of the mid-nineteenth century romantic movement in American architecture.

Josiah Elden Chase, the original owner of this house had, according to his obituary, an eventful life as a mariner.^{/1} Born in East Limington, Chase was the fourth of six children of Josiah and Deborah (Chase) Chase.^{/2} His father was part owner of a sawmill, located at the junction of the Saco and Ossipee Rivers, a site just to the northeast of the house. Deborah Chase was the daughter of Deacon Amos Chase, reputedly the first settler of Limington.

Chase's obituary chronicles the life of a nineteenth century seaman in Maine. At the age of eighteen he removed to New Bedford and made his first voyage aboard the bark "Forester". In 1841 Chase began a three-year whaling expedition on the "Adeline Gibbs" of Fairhaven, returning in 1845. After his third voyage, in which he was twice credited with saving the "Canton Packet", Chase was given his own command of a bark. He retired from the sea in 1876 after a voyage in the ship "California", but later returned to captain the "James Arnold".

At some point between his long periods at sea Chase married Julia Ellen Brown (1832-1915). In 1858 he acquired the property on which the house stands from James Madison Chase (their relationship has not been positively established).^{/3} At the time he purchased the property Josiah E. Chase was residing in Portland.^{/4} After the house was erected the family apparently remained here until some years before Josiah

9. Major Bibliographical References

Taylor, Robert L., History of Limington, Maine, 1668-1900. Oxford Hills Press, 1975.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3

Quadrangle name Limington, Me., Provisional Ed., 1983

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 9	3 6 6	2 1 0	4 8 4 2 7 2 5
Zone	Easting	Northing		
C	_____	_____	_____	_____
E	_____	_____	_____	_____
G	_____	_____	_____	_____

B	_____	_____	_____	_____
Zone	Easting	Northing		
D	_____	_____	_____	_____
F	_____	_____	_____	_____
H	_____	_____	_____	_____

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property of three acres is shown in Town of Limington Tax Map #R-9, Lot 76-A.

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 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

title J. H. P.O. date 2/9/87

For NPS use only

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

Patrick Andrus

date 3/25/87

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Beth Savage

date 3/25/87

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

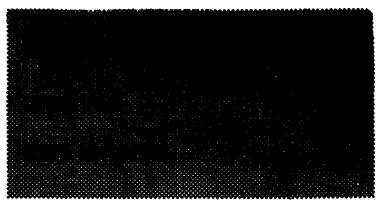
CAPTAIN JOSIAH E. CHASE OCTAGON HOUSE

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 2



Chase's death. In his will Chase left the house in East Limington to his wife, and after her death it descended to her son Charles Nicholas Chase (1865-1948). The property remained in the family until 1971.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

CAPTAIN JOSIAH E. CHASE OCTAGON HOUSE

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 3

Endnotes

- . /1 A copy of Chase's obituary is located among family papers. Unfortunately, it is not marked as to the date and paper in which it appeared.
- . /2 The material on the Chase family genealogy is taken from Robert Taylor's History of Limington, Maine 1668-1900 (Oxford Hills Press, 1975).
- . /3 York County Deeds, Office of the Registry of Deeds, York County Courthouse, Alfred, Book 261, p. 210.
- . /4 Chase's name appears in the 1858/9 edition of the Portland City Directory where he was residing on 17 India Street. He gave his occupation as that of a shipmaster.