

PH0673072

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 25 1976

DATE ENTERED

MAY 3 1978

**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 Catherine Fiske Seminary for Young Ladies

**

AND/OR COMMON

President's House, Keene State College

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 251 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Keene

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

New Hampshire

CODE
33

COUNTY

Cheshire

CODE

005

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 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of New Hampshire, Keene State College

STREET & NUMBER

229 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Keene

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Hampshire

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cheshire County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

12 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Keene

STATE

New Hampshire 03431

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Plan

DATE

1970

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

New Hampshire Department of Resources & Economic Development

CITY, TOWN

Concord

STATE

New Hampshire

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The President's House, Keene State College, located at 251 Main Street, is a four-square, two-story, brick mansion with hipped roof built in 1805 by John G. Bond, storekeeper and early Keene postmaster, on a 20-acre plot sold to him by his father-in-law, the Honorable Daniel Newcomb. For twenty years it served as the home of Miss Fiske's Seminary for Young Ladies.

Originally of Federal design, the building was "modernized" in an ornate Italianate manner during the late 19th century with the addition of bracketed cornices, elaborate hooded and scrolled second-floor window pediments, and a square, open entrance porch with triple corner posts and veranda of similar but lighter design, which continued around the north and south sides of the building. The veranda was subsequently removed. The first-floor windows retain their Federal brick lintels with decorative projecting keystones. Beneath its Italianate porch, the Federal-era entrance remains with arched fan and flanking sidelights; stained glass entrance doors, which replaced the original door, were themselves removed approximately 50 years ago. The house is painted white.

There are six large fireplaces within the ten-room house. One on the second floor has been closed and others have been refinished with fancy tiling during the latter part of the past century. Only the dining room fireplace is the original.

When Miss Fiske kept her school there from 1824-44, she added two wooden wings for study and sleeping accommodations; the wings are no longer extant.

The property was acquired by the state in 1909 and the stable was used for auto mechanics classes. In 1925, the stable burned; the cellar hole was graded and made into a sunken garden. A shed was added to the rear ell of the house for a garage.

When the state founded the normal school, the northeast front room of the first floor was furnished entirely by the state. Few major changes were made to the house during the occupancy of the Dr. Wallace Mason family.

The mansion, a fine example of one of the first brick houses to be built in Keene, stands on its original site, an interesting and attractive amalgamation of Federal design and Italianate decorative "improvements."

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Home, President of Keene State College
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1805; 1824; 1909

BUILDER/ARCHITECT ---

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1805 by John G. Bond, postmaster and one of the first directors of the Cheshire Bank, the President's House is not only a fine illustration of one of the early brick mansions built in Keene, but it is also noted for being the home of Miss Catherine Fiske's famous Seminary for Young Ladies. It was in this house that she successfully managed from 1824-44 the first boarding school for young women in the state of New Hampshire and the second such school in the country.¹

During the thirty years of its existence more than 2,500 students from nearly every state were enrolled. All branches of learning were taught including drawing, painting, music and ornamental needlework. Miss Fiske advertised that strict attention would be paid to the improvement of young ladies, their manners and their morals.²

The Seminary for Young Ladies opened in 1814 under the patronage of Miss Fiske's friend, Mrs. Daniel Newcomb, on the east side of Main Street. Miss Fiske moved her school to the Bond House in 1824, having purchased it from William Appleton who had acquired it from Benjamin Wiggins. John G. Bond had sold his estate to Mr. Wiggins when he moved to Michigan to accept a position as a judge.³

Miss Catherine Fiske was an excellent teacher and manager. To the original 20 acre farm she added an additional 20 acres of intervalle and pasture on Beech Hill. Here she kept ten cows and furnished her school with milk, butter and produce from the farm. One year she raised 700 bushels of potatoes and her bread making was done on the scientific principles of chemistry. Her handsome carryall, with a long procession of girls with their teachers enroute to the Congregational and Unitarian churches, was a marked feature of a Sunday morning in Keene.⁴

Summers she could take 60 students; winters only 35. For these students she provided from four to six teachers. Students were required to enroll for a full term. She also admitted day students and held a class of instruction for local boys.⁵

The Seminary for Young Ladies continued for ten years after Miss Fiske's death on May 20, 1837, but the competition from the new Keene Academy finally made it necessary to close the school. It passed hands several times in the space of a few months. A six rod strip was added to the south side of the estate and in 1846, Sumner Wheeler purchased the land from the Ashuelot Bank. Wheeler and his half-brother, Justus, ran a glass manufacturing factory for many years.⁶

Wheeler's widow sold the estate in 1868 to Madison Fairbanks, manufacturer and active real estate man. Madison Street in Keene is named in memory of him. In 1873, Edward

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Federal Writer's Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of New Hampshire, New Hampshire: A Guide to the Granite State, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938.

Smith, Marjorie Whalen, Historic Homes of Cheshire County, Keene, N.H.: 1968.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. .08 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	7	2	2	1	5	0	4	7	5	6	1	0	0	
	ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING	
C															
D															

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Marjorie W. Smith, Author, Historic Homes of Cheshire County, and Marion Wood, Vice President, Keene Alumni Association

ORGANIZATION Keene State College Alumni Association

DATE March 8, 1975

STREET & NUMBER 229 Main Street

TELEPHONE 603-352-1909, ext. 304

CITY OR TOWN Keene

STATE New Hampshire 03431

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

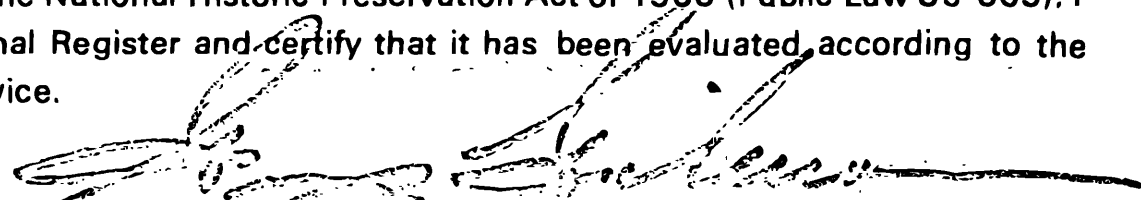
NATIONAL

STATE XX

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 NH State Historic Preservation Officer
Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

DATE September 22, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST 

DATE 5-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5-3-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Significance, continued.

C.Thayer who later donated the Colony House on West Street to the City as a public library building, became the owner of the house.⁷

In 1895, Mrs. Thayer had the ell on the house removed and replaced by a two-story addition as an apartment for her brother. After her death it was found that the ell was willed to her maid and coachman jointly. William Pearson bought the property, moved the new ell onto Appian Way and in 1909 sold the estate to the state for the newly founded normal school.

The first pianos brought to town were for Miss Fiske's use in her school and the first pipe organ used in town was made by William Willson of Keene and Placed in the school.⁹ It is appropriate that this historically significant mansion, having housed one of the first educational programs for women in the state and in the country, should serve as a home for the presidents of another educational institution, Keene State College.

¹Keene History Committee, Upper Ashuelot, A History of Keene, NH, (Keene, NH: 1968), p.368.

²Irving S. Heath, History of Keene State College Campus (Under supervision of the National Youth Administration, 1940-41), p.23.

³S. G. Griffin, History of the Town of Keene (Sentinel Printing, 1904), p.567.

⁴Heath, loc. cit.

⁵Catherine Fiske, Catalogues of Young Ladies' Seminary, Keene, N.H. (Reference Room, Keene Public Library).

⁶Heath, op.cit., p.24.

⁷Ibid., p.25.

⁸Ibid.

⁹S. G. Griffin, op.cit. p.597.

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Major Bibliographical References, continued.

Griffin, Simon G., A History of the Town of Keene from 1732 When the Township was Granted by Massachusetts, to 1874 When It Became a City, Keene, NH, 1904.

Keene History Committee, "Upper Ashuelot," A History of Keene, New Hampshire, Keene, NH, 1968.

Heath, Irving S., History of Keene State College Campus, Under the Supervision of the National Youth Administration, 1940-41.

Fiske, Catherine, Catalogues of Young Ladies' Seminary, Keene, New Hampshire, Wright Room, Keene Public Library.