

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Maine</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Lincoln</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Nickels-Sortwell House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Main Street at Federal Street, Northeast corner**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Wiscasset**

STATE: **Maine** CODE: COUNTY: **Lincoln** CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**141 Cambridge Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Boston** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE: **02114**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Lincoln County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Wiscasset** STATE: **Maine** CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey (3 photos, 6 data pages)**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1960, 1962, 1968**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE: **20540**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Nickels-Sortwell House is a large L-shaped three-story frame house with low hip roof and a notably elaborate facade. The main house is rectangular in shape and has a large slightly lower three-story ell located at the rear northwest corner. The structure is about 45 feet wide and 83 feet deep, including the rear ell. The five-bay wide main (south) facade and the east side are flush-boarded and the walls of the other elevations are clapboarded. The entrance door, situated in the center bay of the south facade, is flanked by elaborately mullioned side lights and topped by a wide elliptical fan light. This doorway is very similar to Plate 20 in Asher Benjamin's American Builder's Companion, in the edition of 1806. The door is sheltered by a one-story Corinthian portico with a balustrade on its roof; this Adamesque portico was added as an improvement to the house as a part of the 1917-18 restoration. The two first-story bays flanking the entrance are arcaded and from this base four Corinthian pilasters rise two-stories in height. In the second-story of the center bay, above the door, is a Palladian window, and in the third-story, a concentric lunette or semi-circular window. Molded architraves frame the flat-arch windows. Third-story windows are reduced in height and all windows are adorned by exterior louvered shutters. The main cornice has a double row of dentils. The rectangular portion of the house has a tall chimney at either end and two more chimneys are located in the rear ell.

The house has a modified central hall plan. A hall extends through the center of the rectangular portion of the house and is divided by means of a partition behind the staircase into two sections, with an entrance hall in front and a service hall behind. A third section of the hall continues northward along the east side of the rear ell. The front door opens into an entrance hall that is semi-oval in shape. This room is divided by an arch and beyond the arch is a fine freestanding spiral staircase. The staircase is separated from the center service hall to the north by an elliptical partition. Doors in the east and west walls of the entrance hall lead into the two large parlors that occupy the entire first floor of the rectangular portion of the house. Windows in these rooms have seats and folding interior shutters. The door frames cornices, and mantel pieces are decorated with rope carving and the fireplace in the east parlor has a freestanding post. Opening off the north end of the west parlor, and located in the rear ell, are first the dining room, and beyond this, the kitchen. The rear porch, at the northeast corner, was added in 1900.

The Nickels-Sortwell House is in good condition and is open to visitors during the summer months as a furnished historic house exhibit.

(continued on next page)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Maine, A Guide to "Down East" (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1927), 218.  
Maine Writers Research Club, Historic Churches and Homes of Maine (Portland, Maine, 1937), 161-67  
Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes - North (New York, 1956), 70.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		44°	00'	15"
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "		69°	40'	03"
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian  
 ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE 7/21/70  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
801 19th Street, N. W.  
 CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE D. C. CODE \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/>    State <input type="checkbox"/>    Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____                  Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____                  Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1807-08

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1807-08, the Nickels-Sortwell House is a splendid example of a large and elaborate frame town house designed in the Adamesque-Federal style.

History

Captain William Nickels, a shipmaster, erected this three-story residence in 1807-08. He died shortly thereafter and the house then passed through many hands. The building was used as a hotel from around 1820 to 1900. The property was acquired by Alvin F. Sortwell in the latter year and the house was restored by Sortwell in 1917-18. In 1958 Miss Francis Sortwell deeded the mansion to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS