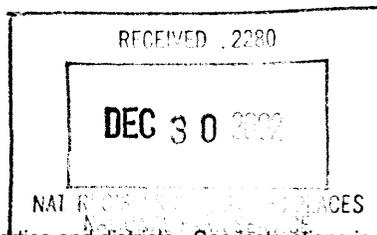


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

16



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name East Blue Hill Post Office

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 13 Curtis Cove Road N/A not for publication

city or town East Blue Hill N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Hancock code 009 zip code 04629

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carol Fredenburg 12/26/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson A. Beall 2/12/03

EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE
Name of Property

HANCOCK CO., MAINE
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT / Post Office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT / Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Continuation Sheet

EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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DESCRIPTION

The East Blue Hill Post office is a small, two room, one-and-one-half story, gable-fronted frame structure located on the south side of Curtis Cove Road, in East Blue Hill Maine. Built circa 1884 and positioned on concrete blocks and roofed with asphalt, the clapboarded building faces north. The two-bay facade contains a single two-over-two window and a door on the first floor, with a slightly smaller two-over-two under the gable peak on the second floor. The structure's hint of Italianate detailing is found in the bracketed hood over the front door, and the exposed rafter tails simulating decorative brackets under the overhanging roof. A brick chimney protrudes through the ridge at the south end of the roof. Fastened to the front gable peak is a wooden flag pole: additional official postal designations include a sign proclaiming the building as the "East Blue Hill Post Office. 04629" and a blue, mail box positioned next to the door. The west elevation contains a pair of two over-two windows on either side of a batten door, while the east side contains no windows or doors. An exterior wooden staircase to the second floor and two windows fill the south wall of the structure. A similar, but smaller and windowless, building is located just to the east of the Post Office, and serves as the facility's woodshed.

The interior of the structure is comprised of three spaces: the box lobby, the main lobby and the mail room. Each room makes extensive use of 4" pine boarding for the interior finishes. On the floor the unpainted pine has been worn around the knots by years of foot traffic, while horizontal and vertically lain painted pine boards cover the walls and ceilings. The box lobby is a small hallway between the front door and the main lobby. The exterior window on the west wall and an early drop-light fixture illuminate the wall-mounted mail boxes. To the left of the boxes is a small, now blocked, window through which night mail used to be distributed. Behind the wall with the mail boxes is the mail room, where the mail is sorted and distributed. Entirely furnished with built-in wooden pieces, the mail room contains a pigeon hole desk, sliding windows to the main lobby, shelves, counters, and a safe. The most prominent feature of the mail room is the back of the mail boxes, each labeled by family name and stuffed with letters.

The main lobby occupies the entire south half of the structure, and is separated from the box lobby by a four-panel Victorian door. This room, the largest in the building, forms the social and commercial heart of the operation. A small, low wood stove is located in the center of the room; its stovepipe rises to the ceiling before snaking its way to the chimney on the south wall. Bookshelves line the east wall, continue over the portal to the mail room, and crown the postal notices tacked onto the wooden wall between the two rooms. A long wooden counter stretches from north to south in front of the bookshelves, and at its north end, a swinging gate (which is most comfortable in the open position), separates the Postmasters realm (the mail room and back counter) from the public lobby and the stove. The west wall of the room contains a public bulletin board, window and unused exterior door, while tucked into the southwest corner is a wood and glass display case filled with mason jars, coffee cups and handicrafts. A kindling box is built along the western wall and several

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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chairs float around the room, positioned at any time to take in the best of the heat, light and company. The second floor of the building is an unfinished, unheated attic, used for storage.

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.

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1884 - 1952

Significant Dates

1884

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

George Long, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Name of repository: _____

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The town of Blue Hill received mail service beginning in 1795, but it was not until 1873 that East Blue Hill is listed in the Maine Register as having its own post office and receiving mail semiweekly. Between 1873 and 1887 the postmaster was G. W. Collins, and an 1881 map of town shows the post office located next to Collins' house and store. In 1888 John A. Miller replaced Collins for a year, and then was followed by J. M. Ridlon in 1889 and 1890. George G. Long began his tenure as postmaster in 1891, and was followed in that position by his descendants until 2000. While local tradition holds that the East Blue Hill Post office was built in 1884 by George Long, for use as a post office to the small but growing community, it's actually construction date may coincide more closely with Long's appointment as local postmaster. Since its opening, this building has served as more than just the post office: it has been the unofficial community center, communications hub, and lending library of East Blue Hill. The building was never owned by the US Postal Service, but has been rented to them by the descendants of George G. Long until 1997, when it was sold to the East Blue Hill Village Improvement Association. The East Blue Hill Post Office is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its role as a communications center for the village, and as a symbol of the community development that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in Hancock County.

East Blue Hill is a village within the Town of Blue Hill, and is located on the far eastern edge of the Blue Hill peninsula. Along with the other towns on the peninsula, Brooksville, Brooklyn, Castine, Deer Isle, Penobscot, Sedgewick, Surry, and Stonington, life in the 19th century revolved around fishing and farming, boat building, lumber harvesting and granite quarrying. The village of East Blue Hill was settled in the first decades of the 19th century and contained first a saw mill and by 1831, a grist mill. The population increased substantially after a road to Ellsworth was constructed in 1825, and a bridge connecting the village to Blue Hill was installed in 1835. As with many towns, the population dropped by 13% during the 1860s, but then steadily rebounded to a high of 2213 according to the 1880 Federal census. An 1881 map depicts six granite quarries and one gold and silver mine clustered around the village of East Blue Hill, as well as several large stone sheds, stone yards, wharfs and a steamboat landing. The semi-weekly mail was received at a post office near the home of G.W. Collins. Over the next 20 years, the population of the entire Town of Blue Hill dropped by 385 residents, but the number of post offices in the town increased, cresting at 6 in 1900. This pattern was repeated throughout the peninsula: in 1880 the combined total population of the peninsula towns was 12,745 people receiving mail at 29 postal offices, which increased to 40 post offices in 1900, while serving only 11,513 residents. While this pattern is counterintuitive, it does suggest that the population in the older town centers moved to newer, peripheral settlements, clustered far enough away from the town to warrant a separate post office.

This pattern of growth and the expansion of the postal service on the Blue Hill peninsula reflected a similar expansion on a nationwide level. In 1870 28,000 post office served the nation. This number

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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grew to 62,000 in 1890 and peaked at 77,000 in 1901. However, with the advent of Rural Free Delivery, and later, village delivery service, the Postal Service reduced by 25,000 the number of fourth class rural post offices by 1920. On the Blue Hill peninsula the number of post offices dropped to 35 in 1920 (31 in 1930), while in Blue Hill, the last three of the expansion post offices were closed by 1930. The East Blue Hill post office survived. (Scheele, p. 114-116; Margolis, p. 8,9). As a geographically compact village, located four miles from the center of Blue Hill, it was neither large enough to warrant a Rural Free Delivery Route, nor close enough to town to require having the villagers pick up their mail there. East Blue Hill was not a satellite of its larger progenitor; rather it was its own small town with a school, industry, church, library (after 1914) and post office. Postal historian Richard J. Margolis characterizes the post office as one of the institutions that bound a community together in the 19th and early 20th century.

“Despite the inroads made by rural free delivery, many small-town residents still prefer to rent boxes at their post office. It is a choice of intentional inconvenience, which is to say they would rather be sociable (taking daily trips to the post office) than lonely (awaiting delivery of mail at the house). As nearly everyone I interviewed kept telling me, the post office is a good place to meet one’s friends and neighbors.”(Margolis, p. 16).

Throughout the second half of the 19th century the style of Federal buildings were determined by the Architect of the Treasury, or later, by a contract architect. Indeed this is the case for all but one of the 17 post offices in Maine that are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Only the Old Post Office in Liberty Maine (NR:73000149) started as a privately designed building that was later adapted for use as a Federal facility. Architectural surveys in Maine suggest another pattern of post office development; as towns expanded, post offices were located in private residences, often in a front room or a side ell, or in an existing store. The East Blue Hill post office differs from each of these examples. It was designed and built by a local resident specifically to serve as the postal facility for the village, however, the structure has never been owned by the US Postal service, rather it has been rented from the builder’s family. The small, unassuming building blends the quiet simplicity of the village architecture: frame construction, minimal adornments, simple geometry and an unpretentious facade. Although smaller than the surrounding homes, the Post Office reflects the predominant architectural style during the villages greatest period of growth in the 1880s.

Postal historians stress the role that the post office plays in the community life of a small town. In addition to its primary function of distributing the mail, the East Blue Hill post office has and continues to be a community center. Evidence of this is seen in the main lobby where bulletin boards advertise the local bean suppers, babysitters, and hunter training courses while wooden chairs are pulled up around the wood stove. Over the years children bought candy from the glass display case on the counter and if the library wasn’t open, a book could be borrowed for a few days. In researching the role of rural post offices in community life, Margolis found this use of a post office not uncommon.

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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The daily ritual of walking to the post office, of visiting there with neighbors, of being recognized and called by name - all of this seems part of a comforting ceremony and an important item on the villager's social agenda. In Lemont [PA] recently, some interested citizens spent several days sitting by a window in a restaurant across the street from the post office on Pike Street, tabulating the comings and goings of their fellow residents. They discovered that people stayed in the building a long time, much longer than their postal business would have seemed to require. And on the sidewalk in front, as one observer noted, "little knots of people kept forming, even in the coldest weather. Everyone stopped to chat". (Margolis, p. 16).

Much of the appeal of the East Blue Hill Post office has been the company of the last two postmasters, Walter and Roni Conary, who served the town from 1947 until Mrs. Conary's death in 2000. Over the years the personal touch found at the East Blue Hill post office was legend:

"Mrs. Conary runs the stars and stripes to the top of the post office flap (sic) pole every clear day except Sunday at 8 a.m. In late fall and winter, she then builds a fire in the small wood stove that has been heating the building for as long as she can remember. Shortly after 9 a.m. her patrons begin to arrive to pick up their letters and occasional packages or just to visit. She soothes their disappointments when looked-for mail doesn't come; rejoices when good news is shared. East Blue Hill's postmistress knows the source of each ache and pain, be it in limbs giving 'way to the onslaught of the years, or hearts twisted with loneliness...." (Meeter, 1974).

Prior to Mrs. Conary's death in 2000, she sold the East Blue Hill Post Office to the East Blue Hill Village Improvement Society; in turn, the Village Improvement Society leases the space to the Postal Service. Since its construction the building has received very few improvements: electricity and a phone have been installed, but the building does not contain any running water or bathroom facilities, nor any heat source other than the wood stove. The Village Improvement Society intends to maintain the building in its present condition.

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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Clough, Annie L. Head of the Bay. (Ellsworth, Maine: Downeast Graphic & Printing, Inc.), 1983.

Larson, Steve. "Roni Conary - delivering service for 54 years" in *Ellsworth Weekly*, Vol 4, Issue # 47. (November 22, 1996).

Meteer, Louise. "Post mistress serves in more ways than one" in *Tuesday Weekly* (Ellsworth, Maine: November 26, 1974), p. 13

Hoyt, Edmund. Maine State Year Book and Legislative Manual. (Maine Register). (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg and Donham), 1884 -1930.

Margolis, Richard J. At the Crossroads: An Inquiry into Rural Post Offices and the Communities They Serve. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1980.

Scheele, Carl H. A Short History of the Mail Service. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press), 1970.

The Old Maps of Hancock County, Maine in 1881. (Fryeburg, Maine: Saco Valley Printing), 1990.

EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE
Name of Property

HANCOCK CO., MAINE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 9 5 3 8 0 4 4 4 9 1 8 0 7 7
Zone Easting Northing

3 1 9 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 1 9 _____

4 1 9 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 16 October 2002

street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is fully described by the Town of Blue Hill Tax Map # 25, lot 52.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated boundaries represents all the property historically associated with the East Blue Hill Post Office in East Blue Hill, Maine.

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EAST BLUE HILL POST OFFICE

HANCOCK CO., MAINE

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
29 August 2002
North elevation; facing south.

Photograph 2 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
29 August 2002
Post office and woodshed, facing southwest.

Photograph 3 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
29 August 2002
Interior, main lobby, facing north.

Photograph 4 of 4
Christi A. Mitchell
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
29 August 2002
Interior, box lobby; facing southeast.