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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 27 2005

### 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 Colony House

other names/site number NA

#### 2. Location

street & number 104 West Street NA  not for publication

city or town Keene NA  vicinity

state New Hampshire code NH county Cheshire code 005 zip code 03431

#### 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.)

James McLoone 7/25/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
State of 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 the 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 David R. Page Date of Action 9-9-05

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Colony House  
Name of Property

Cheshire NH  
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	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

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

NA

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/hotel

Domestic/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic/Federal

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls brick

roof slate

other sandstone

wood

**Narrative Description**

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetColony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)Section number 7 Page 1

## DESCRIPTION

The Colony House, located on West Street in downtown Keene, New Hampshire, is an outstanding two-story, hip-roofed, brick residence executed in the Federal Style. The structure rests on a rubble foundation topped with hammered granite capstones and consists of the original 1819 three by three bay main block and kitchen wing extending off the rear (south) elevation, and a service wing added to the kitchen wing c1900. The main roofs are slate-clad, the porch roofs clad in copper. Two tall narrow interior end chimneys punctuate the roof at the rear corners of the main block. One tall interior chimney pierces the west slope of the service ell close to its intersection with; the original kitchen wing; a hipped dormer on the rear slope of the service wing lights the attic.

The main block has a three-bay sidehall front (north) elevation. Its elegant entry (in the eastern bay) with original fanlight and sidelights is sheltered beneath a shallow portico. The portico, supported on slender Doric columns, is elaborately detailed with triglyphs, metopes, and guttae. Above the doorway is a Palladian window that lights the stairhall within. Windows are six-over-six double hung sash with sandstone sills.

The kitchen wing of 1819 extends to the rear (south) elevation, set back from the east side elevation of the main block and continuing the west side elevation. It is three bays in extent. Windows match those on the main block. On the east side elevation a two-bay porch on Doric columns with turned balusters shelters the paneled door with rectangular transom light at the north bay, abutting the main block. The west side elevation is adorned with windows matching those elsewhere.

On the east side elevation, the c1900 service wing continues the wall of the kitchen wing and extends four bays, plus a door centered between pairs of windows on the first level. Windows are six-over-six double hung sash. A one-bay portico with turned balusters and supported by Doric columns shelters the paneled door. The west side elevation projects beyond the side wall of the kitchen wing by one bay. Windows and a door are all that distinguish the west façade. The rear (south) elevation is blind except for a small six-over-six window centered in the second story. The shadow of now vanished extensions are evident on the south wall.

The spiral staircase in the main block's entry hall is breathtaking. Although innovative in the New Hampshire seacoast in the 1810s, this is an early representation of such an elaborate feature in the Connecticut River valley. The quality of the interior detailing is outstanding throughout. "...most interior features were inspired by plates in Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion*. "The three surviving original mantelpieces, for example, closely follow various designs given in Plate 28 of that book. Two of these mantelpieces include the distinctive features of pilasters that are supported in a fanciful manner on wooden balls rather than on solid architectural bases. Most door and window casings, chair rails, and baseboards derive from Plate 11. The design and layout of the stairway is suggested by Plates 19, 20, and 21 of that book." Elsewhere in the house one can see that the inspiration for doors, windows, and woodwork clearly traceable to Benjamin's work. (Garvin, 1996)

The c1900 wing was carefully introduced to harmonize well with the earlier structure. The bricks match the originals almost exactly in their size; though slightly darker than the earlier units they blend well. The foundation stones, window sills, and cornices are almost exactly the same as those features dating from 1819. Inside the service wing the interior trim consists of southern yellow pine of high quality and sealed

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Colony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)

Section number 7 Page 2

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with varnish, clearly a product of its own time. On the second story there are two diagonal bedroom fireplaces sharing the same chimney; these feature pressed bricks, terra cotta, and tile facings. (Garvin, 1996)

With the addition of the c1900 service wing, changes were made in the main block and kitchen wing. Throughout the ground floor hardwood flooring was installed along with pressed metal ceilings in all rooms except the stairhall. Two chimneys on the west side of the house were removed, freeing up space for alterations to the parlor in the northwest corner. In addition to the oak floor and pressed metal ceiling, a new baseboard encircling the room masked the location of the earlier chimney. The 1819 kitchen was converted into a dining room with the establishment of a new kitchen in the c1900 wing. The cooking fireplace and oven were removed. Raised panel wainscot, chair rail, and baseboard were installed along with maple flooring and a pressed metal ceiling. A rear door accessed the new butler's pantry and kitchen beyond. Otherwise, the original finishes remained. (Garvin, 1996)

The balance of the property is gravel driveway and lawn with some plantings. A low wooden fence with slender uprights delineates the front and the north portion of the west side of the property.

#### EARLIER APPEARANCE

The Cheshire County map of 1858 shows the brick block and kitchen wing as well as additions to the rear (south) and an outbuilding. The 1887 and 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps appear to show the original main block and kitchen wing with a frame extension where the c1900 brick service wing now stands along with a detached "L" configuration of outbuildings just to the south extending west. The frame extension appears in a photograph taken prior to 1900 which also shows a parapet with sections of balustrade around the eaves of the main block. That same picture shows a clapboarded frame section located where the brick service wing stands today. The wooden trim appears to be painted a medium-dark color and the muntins and louvered blinds even darker. A wooden fence similar in appearance to the one that exists today delineates the front property line along West Street; it seems to be a similar shade to the house trim.

Colony House  
Name of Property

Cheshire NH  
County and State

### 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 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)

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1819

#### Significant Dates

1819

c 1900

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

#### Cultural Affiliation

NA

#### Architect/Builder

Unknown

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Historical Soc. of Cheshire County  
Keene NH

Colony House  
Name of Property

Cheshire NH  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	118	721765	4756935
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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**

Joslin Kimball Frank  
name/title Christine Fonda Rankie \*

organization NH Div. of Historical Resources \* date June 2005  
 104 West Street 603-352-0215  
 street & number 19 Pillsbury St. - 2nd Fl. \* telephone 603-271-6437 \*  
 Keene NH 03431  
 city or town Concord \* state NH \* zip code 03301 \*

**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 Joslin Kimball Frank

street & number 104 West Street telephone 603-352-0215

city or town Keene state NH zip code 03431

**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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Colony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)

Section number 8 Page 3

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colony House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is architecturally significant as an excellent representation of Federal Style architecture. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association for 1819, the year of construction.

The house exemplifies the Federal idiom in its lightness and delicacy, elongated windows with narrow muntins, hipped roofs, entry door framed by decorative sidelights and semi-elliptical transom light, sheltering portico supported on slender widely spaced columns and detailed entablature. This was clearly a structure of outstanding quality and design, even having incorporated a parapet/balustrade (now vanished) concealing the roof.

In his "Report on the Hall-Colony House, 104 West Street, Keene, New Hampshire", State Architectural Historian James L. Garvin had this to say:

*Built in 1819 and enlarged at the turn of the twentieth century, the Hall-Colony House is one of the most sophisticated and significant federal-style dwellings in New Hampshire. The house illustrates Keene's growing prosperity in the years after 1800, exemplifies the architectural mastery of the town's early-nineteenth-century building craftsmen, records the spread of a new architectural style into Cheshire County in the early 1800s, and reflects the care with which Hon. Horatio Colony preserved the original character of the dwelling while enlarging the house and modernizing it to his own taste in the 1900s. The house was built with the highest standard of craftsmanship known in New England in 1819, was meticulously maintained by the Colony family during their ownership of the property, and remains in sound structural condition.*

Historical Background:

Timothy Hall built this residence for himself in 1819 at a cost of \$7,000. Hall was a local entrepreneur in business with Captain Aaron Hall, a relative. They were in business selling English and West Indian goods and druggists supplies in the firm of A & T Hall. The business, established in 1813 was the first to sell flour in a store beginning in 1822; prior to that flour was sold only in gristmills. The business operated until 1850. (*Upper Ashuelot*, p. 465)

In 1863 the house was purchased by lawyer Horatio Colony, son of Josiah and Hannah Taylor Colony. In 1867, he joined the business of Josiah Colony and Francis Faulkner, a woolen cloth producer established 1815. Colony went on to become president and treasurer of Faulkner & Colony Manufacturing Company at its incorporation in 1889. He was later named president of Cheshire Mills in Harrisville, New Hampshire. When Keene became a city in 1874, Horatio Colony became its first mayor serving two terms.

Horatio and his wife, Emeline Joslin Colony, occupied the house until his death in an automobile accident in 1917, at which time the ownership passed to their son, John Joslin Colony. He and his wife, Charlotte Whitcomb Colony, remained as residents of the house until their deaths (his in 1955, hers in 1963).

The house and surrounding property was sold by their children to the National Grange Mutual Insurance Company (NGM) in 1966. In 1973, after considering a number of possible uses for the building, NGM announced its plans to raze the structure unless someone wanted to move it from its site. Through the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Colony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)

Section number 8 Page 4

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combined efforts of the Foundation for the Preservation of Historic Keene and the National Grange, agreement was reached to loan the building to the Historical Society of Cheshire County (HSCC). A fund drive was established to raise money for repair and renovation of the building and the HSCC's museum and offices were located here from 1974 to 1991.

From 1991 to 1997 the property was occupied sporadically by community organizations and little attention was paid to maintenance or general upkeep.

In 1997, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) purchased the building from the National Grange in hopes of finding a buyer who would be interested in preserving it. Over the course of two years, no viable purchaser was identified. MEDC's loan, taken to purchase the house and hold it until an appropriate buyer could be found, was coming due; it could no longer afford to carry the building. In a last ditch effort, a descendent of Horatio Colony placed an advertisement in the Keene Sentinel newspaper inviting citizens to an open house and alerting the public that it was possibly the last chance to see this magnificent house before it was torn down.

The open house further galvanized local concern over the future of the Colony House. In 1999 a small parochial school proposed to relocate there. A lack of support from local churches and the Roman Catholic Diocese undermined this effort and the house was again for sale a year later.

The Colony House was again in danger of demolition when its current owner, a granddaughter of Horatio and Emeline Joslin Colony, purchased it in 2001. Since then, a National Park Service Certified Rehabilitation has been undertaken, returning the house to good repair and beauty. The c1900 service wing operates as a bed and breakfast, while the original portion is a private residence.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Colony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)

Section number 9,10 Page 5

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Garvin, James L. "Report on the Hall-Colony House, 104 West Street, Keene, New Hampshire" June 30, 1996. (New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, Concord NH)

Keene History Committee *Upper Ashuelot, A History of Keene, New Hampshire*. City of Keene: 1968.

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, Keene, New Hampshire, 1884, 1892, 1897, 1902, 1908, 1913, 1924, 1950, 1971.

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown on the attached sketch map. The subject property is identified as Lot #046060060000 in the City of Keene Assessor's Records.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of the remaining property associated with the Colony House.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Colony House  
Keene NH (Cheshire)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 6

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**PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION**

Relating to all photographs:

- 1.) Colony House; 104 West Street
- 2.) Keene NH; Cheshire County
- 3.) Photographer: Joslin Kimball Frank
- 4.) June 2005
- 5.) Joslin Kimball Frank

PHOTO 1:

East (side) and North (front) elevations; facing SW

PHOTO 2:

North (front) and West (side) elevations; facing SE

PHOTO 3:

South (rear) and East (side) elevations; facing NW

PHOTO 4:

West (side) and South (rear) elevations; facing NE

PHOTO 5:

Entry Hall Staircase; facing S

PHOTO 6:

Entry Hall Staircase (Detail); facing S

PHOTO 7:

Entry Hall Staircase (Detail: trim between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Floors); facing N

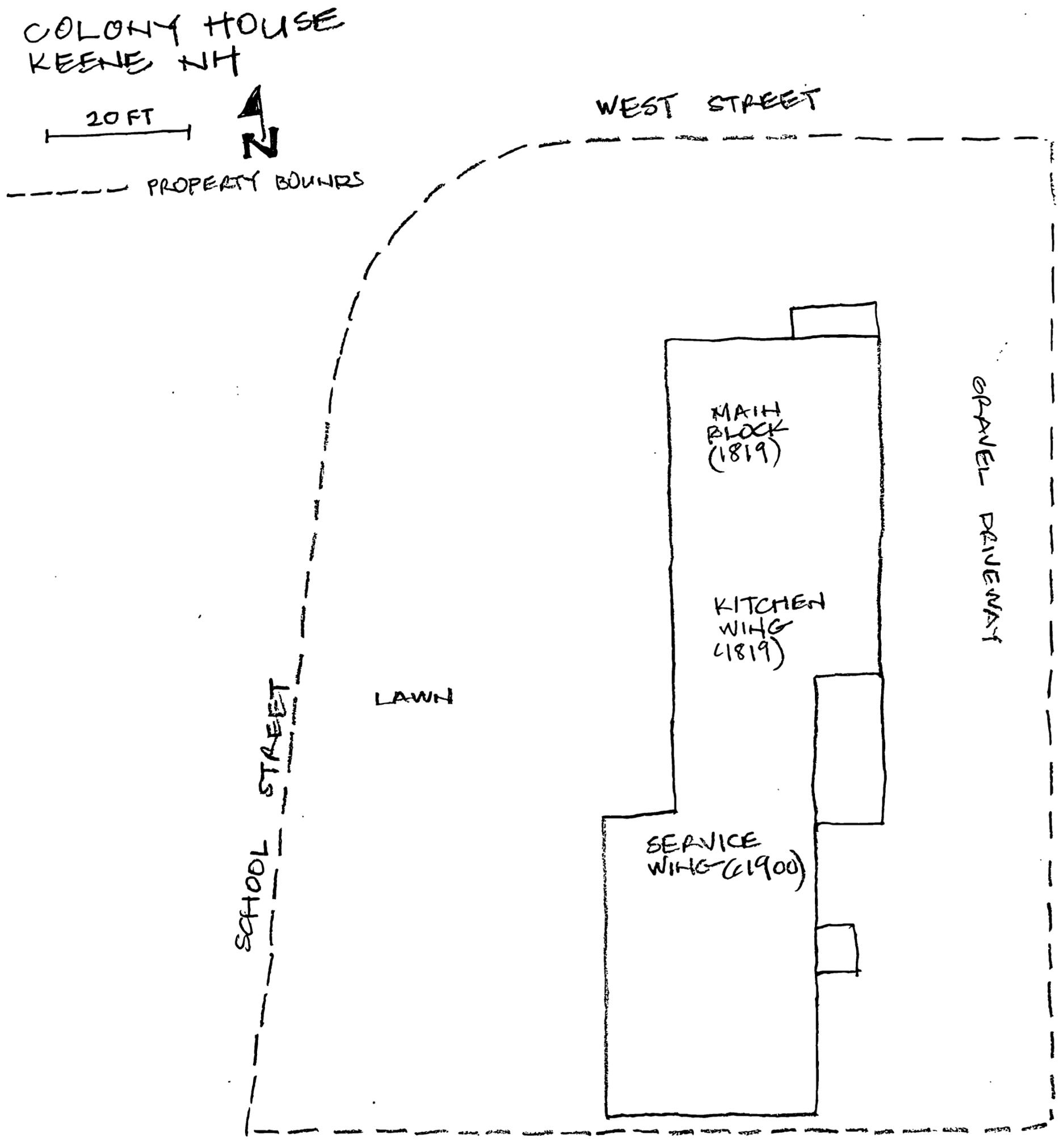
PHOTO 8:

Entry Hall Staircase (Detail: newel post); facing E

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 7



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 05000969

Date Listed: 09/09/05

Colony House  
Property Name

Cheshire  
County

NH  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

9-9-05  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**8. Period of Significance & Significant Dates**

The period of significance and the significant dates for the property are one and the same--1819 and c. 1900--corresponding to the construction dates for the main house and the addition.

This information was confirmed with Christine Fonda Rankie, National Register Coordinator, NHSPO, by telephone.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)