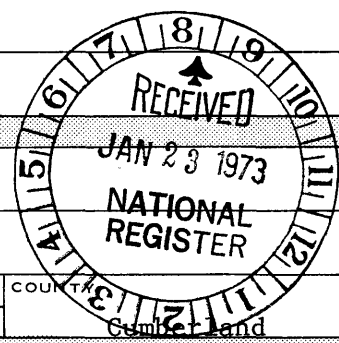


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 9	1973



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Rackleff Building

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
127, 129, 131, 133 Middle Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Portland

STATE: Maine CODE: 23 COUNTY: Cumberland CODE: 005

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Ms. Bertha Seavey

STREET AND NUMBER:  
23 Vesper Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Portland

STATE: Maine CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
142 Federal Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Portland

STATE: Maine CODE: 23

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Greater Portland Landmarks Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Station A, Box 4197

CITY OR TOWN:  
Portland

STATE: Maine CODE: 23

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine	ENTRY NUMBER: MAY 9 1973	DATE: _____
COUNTY: Cumberland	FOR NPS USE ONLY	

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)  
 Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)  
 Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)  
 Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Rackleff Building is located on the northwestern side of Middle Street in Portland. It faces southeast toward Middle Street and is bounded on the northeastern side by Church Street. The Woodman Block is adjacent to it on the southwest; together they form an entire city block. The Rackleff Building, like its neighbors, is in the Second Empire style.

Architect George M. Harding designed the Rackleff Building. He also designed the Woodman Block and the Thompson Block, on the other side of the Rackleff Building. It was built in 1867. Like the Woodman Block, the Rackleff Building is built of brick with freestone trim. It is almost a parallelogram in shape; sixty feet wide across the front and one hundred and fifteen feet along the sides. It is three stories high and has a practically flat roof. Some features of the Rackleff Building are identical to those of the Woodman Block, but it is designed to be an individual unit.

The cast iron arcade of the first floor of the facade is identical to that of the Woodman Block, only about one foot lower, causing the whole facade of the Rackleff Building to be lower than that of the Woodman Block. The arches support an entablature used for store names. Recessed doors approached by short flights of stairs, and full length windows alternate in the seven bays of the arcade. On the second floor are three single windows to either side of a central double window. Projecting brick columns which continue up to the roof frame this double window, creating a central bay. There are similar columns at either end of the facade. At the corner of the building on the right, the facade wraps around to the side forming a rounded version of the center bay. The second floor windows have freestone sills and freestone arches which are connected by a freestone stringcourse. On the third floor are three windows to either side of an identical window in the center bay. The freestone arches are connected by a stringcourse. The sills are also connected by a stringcourse which joins with the third floor stringcourse of the adjacent Woodman Block. Just below this stringcourse is another one; the two frame, a plaque which says "Rackleff". The projecting wooden cornice is capped by pairs of freestone brackets above the columns on the facade. Between the brackets are a band of elongated freestone hexagons and a band of carved freestone quatrefoils. No roof shows above the cornice today. Originally there was an arched window above the center bay.

The Church Street (northeastern) side of the Rackleff Building is simpler than the facade. The windows of the second and third floors have freestone arches and sills like those on the facade but none are connected by stringcourses. Only a narrow freestone stringcourse runs below the sills of the third floor windows. Sunken arched panels make the side of the first floor look like an arcade. Arched windows and fanlights alternate in the bays. The overhanging cornice continues along this side but has only periodic pairs of brackets. In the center of the side this cornice forms a gable. The gable has a round window in it and below

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



(See Continuation Sheet)

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maine	
COUNTY	
Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 9 1973

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

shield with "H" carved on it, no doubt for Harding.

The same simplified cornice continues across the rear of the building. On the second and third floors are six windows, divided into groups of three on either side. On the first floor are various arched window and door openings; none have freestone trim. All the windows on the rear had solid wooden shutters, like those currently on the Woodman Block, which are now missing. Originally there were other buildings to the rear of the Rackleff Building separated from it by a passageway parallel to Middle Street. There are none today.

The freestone of the Rackleff Building has been painted. The original six-over-six windows of the upper floors remain; some of the four light windows on the first floor have been replaced. The building looks very much as it did originally. It is still used commercially.



**6. 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) 1867

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input checked="" 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

George M. Harding practiced architecture in Portland for only a short period. He began a private architectural practice in Boston in 1853. By 1856 he left Boston, probably for New Hampshire as there are buildings by him in Concord and Manchester. In 1858, he arrived in Portland. Harding designed Portland High School, built on Cumberland Avenue in 1863-64 (now incorporated in the present school) and the First Universalist Church on High Street in 1865 (now destroyed). After the Great Fire of 1866, Harding played a major role in rebuilding the business district.

The Rackleff Building completes the city block on which the Woodman Block stands. It solves the problem of how to maintain continuity along the street without outdoing or diluting the Woodman Block. The Rackleff Building is a simple dignified building. It forms a good transition between the more ornate Woodman and Thompson Blocks.

These three buildings together, the Woodman Block, the Rackleff Building and the Thompson Block, are the most high style Victorian commercial grouping ever built in Maine. They are part of the Victorian commercial district, an area rebuilt during the 1860's and 1870's after the Great Fire, which was and is becoming again today the heart of Portland. The Victorian buildings remaining in the Exchange Market and Middle Street area, together with Portland's handsome government buildings, form an architecturally rich district within the city.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Shettleworth, Earle G., Jr. "City's Victorian Business District Fascinating Area". Portland, Maine: Evening Express, August 6, 1966.

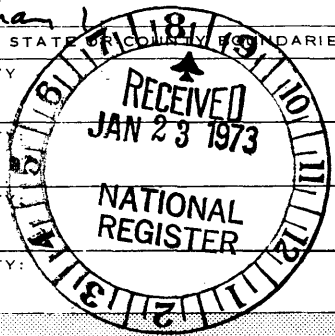
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43 ° 39 ' 29 " N	70 ° 15 ' 14 " W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: *less than 1/2*

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Mary-Eliza Wengren, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: October, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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:

National  State  Local

Name James H. Mundy  
Title State Liaison Officer  
Date January 15, 1973

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

Robert M. Utley  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/9/73

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 5 7 73