

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 29 1980
date entered MAY 15 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Sawyer Tavern

and/or common The Sawyer Tavern

2. Location

street & number 63 Arch Street not for publication

city, town Keene vicinity of congressional district Second

state New Hampshire code 33 county Cheshire code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Constance and Robert K. Wood

street & number 63 Arch Street

city, town Keene vicinity of state New Hampshire 03431

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cheshire County Registry of Deeds
Cheshire County Courthouse

street & number 12 Court Street

city, town Keene vicinity of state New Hampshire 03431

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town vicinity of state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> additions	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The main house, resting on a fieldstone foundation, is a full two stories plus attic. There are two chimneys and a central entrance door plus four other doors. The front rooms upstairs and down seem to be unchanged; each has a fireplace and four windows. A line of nail holes in the floor of one of the downstairs rooms may indicate the location of a bar. "Indian shutters" in the parlor slide out to cover the windows which retain the original 12 over 12 panes. A small 1½ story ell at the back appears to be older than the rest of the house because of the plainer woodwork, rougher floors, and darker color of the boards in the loft. This ell contains the old summer kitchen, with its large fireplace, and beehive and warming ovens (the latter disintegrated). A row of six carriage sheds is attached to the house.

There appears to have been little major structural change, except for the raising of the roof. However, about fifty years ago, some alterations were made. The ballroom upstairs at the back of the house was partitioned by beaver-board walls into three bedrooms and a bath. Five small windows were installed. Another bath was put in the front hall, and a closet added. Downstairs, pine boards were used to replace plaster walls above the wainscoting in the largest room as well as to cover original beams in the ceiling. A window was added in this room and in the working kitchen, where the original fireplace is plastered over, and a closet, cupboards and shelves have been installed. Outside, four of the carriage stalls have been enclosed to form rooms with windows back and front, and back doors. A woodshed was added to the room connecting the house to the carriage stalls; a small original porch relates the side front door to the stalls.

1900

1900

1900

1900

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1803–1806, possibly earlier
Builder/Architect Abraham Wheeler, Jr.; Peter Hobart

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sawyer Tavern served West Keene as a public house from 1806 to 1843, and again from 1922 until about 1950. Josiah Sawyer was the son-in-law of Abraham Wheeler, Jr., who opened the tavern in 1806. Wheeler was born in 1743 in Groton, Massachusetts and began buying land in Keene, in 1766. He served in the militia in 1773, and in 1776, marched to the relief of Ticonderoga; he eventually attained the rank of colonel. Undoubtedly, the tavern was known as Wheeler's until his death in 1814; a painted sign with the date 1811 above a prancing tiger and the name "A. Wheeler," still exists in a private collection. (Lathrop's Early American Inns and Taverns pictures the sign.) It is said that militiamen were recruited and paid in the tavern parlor during the War of 1812; a mustering field was just across the road.

The tavern account book, in the possession of the present owners, records sales and purchases from 1829 through 1883. It is a fascinating directory of names familiar from Griffin's History of Keene, as well as a source of information on local trade and economic patterns. Accounts were settled by barter for goods or services, and reveal the identity of the local blacksmith, miller, ironmonger, stonemason, leatherworker, merchant, etc. From 1843 on, sales were confined to farm produce, including grain, vegetables, beef, lamb, and poultry. In 1883, only butter, eggs, chicken and cream, were sold by the spinster daughters of Josiah Sawyer. They owned the house until its sale to Lillian Sawyer (no relation) in 1922. In their last years Mary J. and Sarah E. Sawyer became recluses, and many tales are told of their eccentricities.

West Keene was a thriving, self-sufficient community at the turn of the 19th century. It had its own grist mill, school, store, and other businesses, including a public house to serve as a center of neighborhood activities. Josiah Sawyer's tavern provided this service in the 19th century. Many present residents of Keene recall having eaten at the tavern earlier in this century when it was a well-known inn and tearoom in the Monadnock area.

As it stands today, the Sawyer Tavern is a well-preserved example of an early 19th century inn. Having served as an inn for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, it has long been a well-known landmark in the Keene area. It is an important reminder of the architecture and lifestyle of early 19th century New England.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Griffin, S.G. A History of the Town of Keene. Keene: Sentinel Printing Co., 1904.
 Lathrop, Elise. Early American Inns and Taverns. NY: Robert McBride, 1926.
 Smith, Marjorie W. Historic Homes of Cheshire County, NH. Brattleboro, Vt: Griswold
 Offset Printing, 1968.
 History of the Wheeler Family in America. Wadsworth Samuel. Historical Notes with
 Keyed Map of Keene and Roxbury, NH. Keene: Sentinel Printing Company, 1932.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.14 acres **ITEM NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Keene, NH-VT **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 15' Series

UMT References

A	1 8	7 18	9 15 10	4 17	5 17	3 5 10	B						
	Zone	Easting	Northing					Zone	Easting	Northing			
C							D						
E							F						
G							H						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Map 105 Parcel 2
 City of Keene Tax Records

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 Constance Wood
 organization _____ date November, 1975
 street & number 63 Arch Street telephone 352-0054
 city or town Keene state New Hampshire

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
 title New Hampshire Preservation Officer

date July 18, 1978

For HCRS use only

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


 Keeper of the National Register

date 5/15/80

Attest: 
 Chief of Registration

date 5/13/80