

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC THE MacDOWELL COLONY

AND/OR COMMON

The MacDowell Colony

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER High Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Peterborough

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Hampshire

033

Hillsborough

011

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Workshop

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Edward MacDowell Association, Inc.

and retreat for  
musicians, artists  
and writers.

STREET & NUMBER

High Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Peterborough

VICINITY OF

New Hampshire 03458

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

County Court House

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Nashua

New Hampshire

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The MacDowell Colony lies at the northwestern edge of the town of Peterborough, New Hampshire. The major portion of the Colony--400 acres of forest and meadow land containing 42 buildings--is located in a triangle of land defined by High Street on the east and MacDowell Road on the southwest. The original section of the complex--the farm which Edward and Marian Nevins MacDowell purchased in 1896--extends southwest of MacDowell Road to Union Street and, in one section, to the Nubanusitt River (see accompanying maps). Though development pressure has increased steadily in the Peterborough area in the past few years, there has as yet been no direct intrusion on the historic setting of the MacDowell Colony.

A system of gravel roads serves the 42 buildings within the Colony. Of these, 27 are artists' studios, none of which is within sight or sound of another. The design of each studio is unique within the Colony, though all have fireplaces and large porches. Construction materials are wood, brick, and stone, used singly or in combination. Each studio is simply furnished with a table, chairs, and a daybed, and each contains a small lavatory. Studios for composers also contain a grand piano; those for artists feature white walls and north light and have work areas of up to 1,200 square feet.

The administrative and social center of the complex is located just west of High Street (see accompanying building location map). Colony Hall (#31 on the map), a 2-story frame building with columned portico, contains offices, the dining hall, and recreation rooms. Adjacent to it is the Savidge Library (#30, 1 1/2-story, stone) which contains an extensive collection of the work of Colony Fellows. Residence halls are "The Eaves" (#32, 2-story, frame and clapboard), "The Lodge" (#29, 1 1/2-story, stone), and "Hillcrest" (#1, 1 1/2-story, frame and clapboard), which is the farmhouse first occupied by the MacDowells. The majority of the supporting buildings--various barns and shops--are located southwest of MacDowell Road and appear to be part of the original farm. The 1-story log cabin which Edward MacDowell constructed as his own studio (#17) is now maintained as a memorial to him. All of the buildings within the Colony are in good condition and regularly maintained, as are the graves of MacDowell and his wife, located on a low hill east of High Street (#43 on map).

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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                      1896; 1908                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT not applicable

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, was established in 1908 as a living memorial to Edward MacDowell and since that time has become known internationally as a retreat where men and women gifted in the arts enjoy ideal conditions for creative work. MacDowell, the first American to earn an international reputation as a composer of serious music, was also a celebrated pianist and the first professor of Columbia University's department of music. Over the years, more than one thousand artists--among them Willa Cather, Thornton Wilder, James Baldwin, DuBois Hayward, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, and Gail Kubik--have been selected as Fellows of the MacDowell Colony and thirty Pulitzer Prize-winning works have been carried forward in its studios.

The core of the MacDowell Colony was the farm which Edward MacDowell and his wife, Marian Nevins MacDowell, purchased at Peterborough in 1896. The present complex consists of 400 acres of forest and meadow land containing 42 buildings, 27 of which are individual studios. Visitors are welcome at Colony Hall, the administrative and social center of the complex, and at Edward MacDowell's cabin-studio and grave but access to working studios is restricted.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Edward Alexander MacDowell was born in New York City on December 18, 1861. He first studied piano there with Teresa Carreno and then went to Paris, where he was a student of Antoine Marmontel at the Conservatoire. In 1878 MacDowell went to Germany to study composition with Joachim Raff at the Frankfort Conservatory and later taught piano at Darmstadt. Raff introduced MacDowell to Liszt, who arranged for him to play his first Modern Suite at the Allgemeiner Musikverein at Zurich on July 11, 1882. In 1884 MacDowell returned to the United States to marry his former student, Marian Nevins. The couple lived at Wiesbaden, Germany, until 1888 when they returned to the United States, settling at Boston. For the next eight years, MacDowell composed, taught, and gave frequent recitals and performances.

In 1896 MacDowell was invited to establish a department of music at Columbia University in New York. That same year the MacDowells purchased a farm at Peterborough, New Hampshire, where, in a log cabin not far from the main house, he spent his summers composing. Among the noted works MacDowell completed at the farm are Sea Pieces (1898), Fireside Tales (1902), New England Idylls (1902), and two of his piano sonatas, Norse (1900) and Keltic (1901).

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Gilman, Lawrence. Edward MacDowell: A Study (New York, 1909).  
 Howard, J.T. Our American Music (New York, 1930).  
 MacDowell, Marian Nevins. Random Notes on Edward MacDowell and His Music (New York, 1950).  
 "The MacDowell Colony" (pamphlet, n.p., n.d.).  
 Works Progress Administration, American Guide Series. New Hampshire (Boston, 1938).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4<sup>00</sup> acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	2 5, 8	9, 7, 5	4, 7	5, 3	5, 7, 5	B	1 9	2 5, 8	8, 7, 5	4, 7	5, 2	1, 0, 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C	1 9	2 5, 7	4, 7, 5	4, 7	5, 1	7, 7, 5	D	1 9	2 5, 7	7, 0, 0	4, 7	5, 3	5, 5, 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the national historic landmark designation for the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, are those of the 400-acre Colony property as owned by the Edward MacDowell Association, Inc.; specific lines are shown in red on the accompanying survey map (map B, property lines), dated July, 1975.

See Continuation Sheet

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 Original form prepared by S. Sydney Bradford, Historian, 3/9/64.  
 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE 1/6/76

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street, N.W. TELEPHONE 202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

*Inspected: Dec 29, 1962*

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

N/A National Historic Landmark

*George T. Emery*  
*Aug 14, 1978*

TITLE

DATE

## FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*William T. ...*

DATE

*11/24/78*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET MacDowell Colony ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Though MacDowell took on his Columbia appointment with enthusiasm, he was frustrated in carrying out his plans for development of the department; music courses carried no academic credit and few of his students were prepared for the kind of instruction he could give. After a disagreement with university authorities, MacDowell resigned in 1904, unfortunately becoming the subject of much negative publicity.

During MacDowell's years at Columbia, the Peterborough farm had been a haven where he could work without fear of interruption and enabled him, he said, to triple his normal creative output. It was then that he conceived the idea of expanding the original farm and making it a workplace for other artists. However, illness, aggravated by the nervous strain of his final break with Columbia, resulted in a mental and physical decline which ended in his death on January 23, 1908.

The actual creation of the retreat MacDowell had planned was due largely to the efforts of his widow. On her husband's death, Marian Nevins MacDowell deeded the Peterborough farm, which had been expanded to 400 acres, to the Edward MacDowell Association. Initial financing for the complex, known as the MacDowell Colony, came from a fund created two years earlier and sponsored by such men as Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, J. Pierpont Morgan, Victor Herbert, and Henry Van Dyke. From 1908 until her own death in 1956, Mrs. MacDowell toured America each winter, giving concerts of her husband's work, explaining the concept of the retreat he had hoped to create, and raising funds for the operation of the Colony. During the summer months she supervised the building of roads through the Colony and the eventual construction or remodeling of some 40 buildings, 27 of them individual studios.

Today the MacDowell Colony offers professionals in the arts--composers, writers, painters, sculptors, printmakers, photographers, and others--the opportunity to pursue their work under nearly ideal conditions. Colony Fellows are chosen by a committee of distinguished authorities in their particular field. In return for a minimal daily fee, each Fellow receives room and board in one of the Colony's three residence halls and main dining room and the exclusive use of a studio equipped for his art. No studio is within sight or sound of another. The Colony can accommodate 32 artists at a time during the summer but only 20 at other times, since not all of the studios are winterized. The average length of stay is two months.

Traditionally, on leaving the Colony, each Fellow signs his name on the wooden plaque that hangs in his studio. Among the more than one thousand artists whose names now appear on those plaques are Edwin Arlington Robinson, Willa Cather, Thornton Wilder, Gail Kubik, Ernst Toch, James Baldwin, Leonard Bernstein, and

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CONTINUATION SHEET MacDowell Colony ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

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Aaron Copland, who served for a number of years as president of the Colony's board of directors. To date thirty works carried forward at the MacDowell Colony have been winners of the Pulitzer Prize, including Robinson's Tristram, Wilder's Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth, Copland's Appalachian Spring, Toch's Third Symphony, and Frances Fitzgerald's Fire in the Lake.

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Verbal Boundary

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

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Beginning at Point X, which is 500', more or less, from the northern bank of the Nubanusitt River and located on the eastern curb of Union Street, proceed in a northwest direction 300', more or less, to a point; thence northeast 300', more or less, to a point; thence east 150', more or less, to a point; thence northeast 900', more or less, to the eastern curb of MacDowell Road; thence northwest 350' to a point; thence northeast 3250', more or less, to a point; thence east 3,000', more or less, to the west curb of High Street; thence south along the west curb of High Street 1500', more or less, to a point; thence east 160', more or less, to a point; thence south 1500', more or less, to a point; thence west 80', more or less, to a point; thence south 700', more or less, to a point; thence west 600', more or less, to a point; thence southwest 900', more or less, to a point; thence west 1150', more or less, to a point; thence southwest 330', more or less, to the eastern curb of MacDowell Road; thence northwest along MacDowell Road 1300', more or less, to a point; thence southwest-south 1400' to the eastern curb of Union Street; thence northwest 350', more or less, to a point; thence northeast 425', more or less, to a point; thence west 150', more or less, to a point; thence southwest 425', more or less, to the eastern curb of Union Street; thence 75' along the eastern curb of Union Street to a point; thence north 425', more or less to a point; thence northwest 325', more or less, to a point; thence southwest 500', more or less, to the northern bank of the Nubanusitt River; thence west along said bank 500', more or less, to a point; thence northeast to the point of origin.