

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

For NPS use only

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

received AUG 9 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic GILMANTON ACADEMY

and/or common GILMANTON ACADEMY

2. Location

street & number Province Road, n/a not for publication

city, town Gilmanton n/a vicinity of

state N.H. code 33 county Belknap code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Gilmanton

street & number Gilmanton Town Hall, Route 140

city, town Gilmanton Iron Works n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03837

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Belknap County Courthouse/Registry of Deeds

street & number 64 Court Street

city, town Laconia state New Hampshire 03246

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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 type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	n/a moved date n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Gilmanton Academy is a wooden frame school building in the Colonial Revival style. It stands on its own lot near the center of Gilmanton village, set back from Province Road, with its main west front facing the road. The form of the Academy is rather complex for a building of its size. It is almost cruciform in plan. Centered on the short axis of the hip-roofed main block are a somewhat lower gable roofed pavilion to the west and a hip roofed rear wing to the east. Above the junction of the roofs in the center of the main block, rises an open octagonal belfry on a low square base. The main block and pavilion are two stories high, but the rear wing is three stories high as it contains the balcony overlooking the second story auditorium. (Despite the extra story, the rear wing is the same height as the main block.) In the two angles flanking the pavilion are "projections" two stories in height, but shorter than the other sections of the building, and covered by subsidiary low-pitched hip roofs.

The facades of the Academy are clapboarded with sillboards, and, save for the pavilion, cornerboards. The foundation is coursed rough cut granite blocks on the public facades--the pavilion, the projections, the west, north and south facades of the main block. However, the less visible rear foundations, of the rear wing and the east facades of the main block, are brick. The foundation is broken by five small windows, as well as a plain short door and a now boarded up opening to the rear, where, because of the fall of the land, more of the foundation is visible. The facades of the main block, pavilion and rear wing, are topped by a wide box cornice with a moulding and a deep frieze with its own mouldings. The box cornice and frieze of the projections are shallower and the frieze lacks any mouldings. All of the Academy windows, save for two small modern ones, have moulded trim.

The west gable end facade of the pavilion is the main entry facade of the building and is treated accordingly. It is pedimented with flus boarding in the tympanum. The pediment is supported by monumental pilasters at the corners and flanking the central entry, which divide the facade into three equal bays. The pilasters are fluted with classical bases and richly carved capitols, which, but for their lack of acanthus, would be true Composite order capitols. The recessed central entry is reached by modern granite steps with wrought iron railings, which replace deteriorated concrete steps. The opening is framed by plainer pilasters supporting an entablature and an open scrolled pediment. The recessed porch has a hardwood floor, beaded board walls and ceiling. The entry itself is glazed double-leaf doors, beneath a large transom window composed of Queen Anne sash. The doors and transom window are surrounded by a moulded trim with corner blocks. In the central bay directly above the entry is a round window with moulded trim ornamented by a large "keystone". The window is divided into panes by "meridional" mullions and "latitudinal" sash bars. The side bays of the west front each have a twelve over two sash window in the first story and a twelve over twelve sash window in the second story. Between the first and second stories, there is a moulded board interrupted only by the pilasters and the entry's pediment. The north and south sides of the pavilion are largely covered by the projections.

The two projections flanking the pavilion are identical, each one bay wide and one bay deep. On the first story, they both have a twelve over two sash window on the west facade and a triple window--twelve over one sash windows flanking a wider central twelve over two sash window--on the side facade. A plain board, corresponding to the moulded board on the pavilion, separates the first and second stories. Each second story facade has a single eight over eight sash window. The low pitched hip roofs of the projections are hidden by balustrades with turned balusters and square posts topped by finials.

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The west wall of the main block is blank, being largely hidden by the pavilion and the projections. The main north and south elevations each originally had four twelve over twelve sash windows on each story. However, the westernmost window of the second story of the south facade has been replaced by a modern paneled door with a multipane window, which opens onto the modern metal fire escape now found on the south facade. The east facades of the main block, north and south of the rear wing, remain the same, each with three twelve over two sash windows in the first story and one twelve over two sash window in the second story. Two tall and wide brick chimnies break the western slope of the main block's roof, one on each side of the pavilion.

The rear wing appears to have three stories on the east rear facade, but only two on the north and south side facades. In the center of the first story of the east facade is a modern six paneled "quick exit" door with plain trim, opening onto a short modern metal fire escape. (This replaces the original five paneled door with moulded trim that was reached by a wooden stairway.) On each side of the door is a nine pane window. Each of the two upper stories of the east facade features a group of three windows, nine over sash windows on the second level, six over six sash windows on the third level. The north facade has one twelve over twelve sash window on each of its two stories. A later addition is a small modern two over two sash window with plain trim on the first story. Similarly, the two stories of the south facade each have a single twelve over two sash window; and the first story also has a small modern window with plain trim. The main feature of the south facade is a shallow one-story gable roofed projection at the southeast corner of the wing, which houses an exit from the second story auditorium. The blank sides of the projection are clapboarded with cornerboards and sillboards, like the rest of the building. The projection's south front is mostly occupied by double paneled doors with moulded trim. Its box cornice with mouldings and frieze is pedimented over the doorway. Flush boarding fills the small tympanum. The original wooden stairway of this rear exit has been replaced by modern wooden steps with plain railings.

At the center of the main block's roof is the belfry. The low square base is shingled and topped by a moulded cornice. The low wall around the open belfry is also shingled with a moulded cornice, but each face is broken by a section of turned balusters. The bell itself is sheltered by an open octagonal cupola. Eight tall wooden columns support an entablature and an eight sided "dome" with flaring eaves. The cupola's metal sheathed roof is topped by a wooden finial which supports a metal weathervane.

The exterior of the Academy has seen very few changes--new granite front steps and new wooden rear exit steps to replace deteriorated steps, two small modern windows in the rear east wing to light new restrooms, and metal fire escapes with wooden fire escape doors on the main block and the rear wing.

The interior, as might be expected in a building that served as a school for over sixty-five years, is not quite as pristine. Changes in use, modern fire standards and such modern improvement as the flush toilet, have had to be accommodated. Still, the interior is remarkably well preserved. With a few exceptions, the interior plan and features are intact. The interior was always much plainer than the exterior. Except where noted, the walls are plaster with a wainscoating of vertical beaded boarding topped by a moulded rail which also serves as the apron for the window sills. The windows and doors are surrounded by moulded trim with corner blocks. The interior doors, with the exception of later additions, are all five paneled. In most rooms, the floors are of narrow hardwood boards and the ceilings are plastered.

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The first floor is divided by a somewhat irregular central hall, which consists of a wider front section, directly behind the main entry in the pavilion, and a long narrower section dividing the main block and ending at the main stairs to the second story, and the rear hall, both in the rear wing. The second section of the hall is not on the axis of the entry, but is set somewhat to the north to allow a larger classroom on the sunny south side of the building. Here we will describe first the rooms off the front section of the hall, corresponding to the pavilion and the two projections then the rooms off the longer hall in the main block, and finally the rear hall, small rooms and stairway of the rear wing.

In the south wall of the front hall is a door with transom window for the room that once served as the Academy library. The library has the usual plaster walls, save on the east wall, which has horizontal beaded boarding above the wainscoating. On the west wall of the front hall, just north of the entry, is the door to a very small room, lit by a single window. At the north end of the front hall is a door with a transom window to a room corresponding to the first story of the north projection. Designated as the "Principal's Room" on the architects' plans, the room is now outfitted as a small kitchen. On the east side of the northern section of the front hall is a stairway to the backstage area of the second story. The enclosed stairway is reached from the front hall by a five paneled door.

The long section of the central hall is partially lit by two six pane windows high in both the north and south walls which allow light from the classrooms to filter into the hall. The north and south walls both have two doors with transom windows. The southern doors open into a large classroom in the first story of the main block. The two northern doors originally opened into two separate classrooms. But the wall between them was later removed to make one large classroom on the north side. (As the two rooms were virtually identical, the change is today barely noticeable.) Both the south and north classrooms are large, high, well-lit, pleasant rooms. In the east wall of the north room is a door to a small room in the rear wing, originally a closet but later converted to a restroom. This plaster walled room is lit by a small window. The eastern end of the hall is a plaster wall with doors surrounded by plain trim, double doors opening onto the main stairs up to the second story, a single door opening into the rear hall to the south of the stairs. This partition is apparently a later addition, probably constructed to meet modern fire regulations.

The rear hall is a corridor leading to the rear exit. On the north wall are the doors to what was a small cloakroom under the stairs, and to the basement. (The basement, dirt-floored with unfinished brick and stone walls, has been used simply for storage and the furnace.) On the south wall are doors to a closet and what was once another cloakroom. To provide two restrooms, the cloakroom was divided by a partition of vertical boarding. A new door to the hallway and a small modern window were added to serve the new room thus created.

The wide stairs to the second story have turned balusters and elaborate newelposts as well as wainscoating on the side wall. The stairs from the hall mount to a landing, from which a steep stairway leads down to the rear exit on the south side of the rear wing. From the landing, lit by three tall windows, another flight of steps leads up to the second story landing. Off from this landing are single doors to the balcony and a storage room, and two sets of double doors to the auditorium that occupies most of the second story. The auditorium has wainscoating, but the plaster walls have been partially covered with plywood. The ceiling is not the usual plaster, but decorative pressed metal. The room is well lit by

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windows in the north, south and east walls. In the center of the east wall above the two main entries is the balcony (the third level of the rear wing), whose beaded board face, curved at the corners, projects somewhat into the room. In the center of the west wall is the stage with flattened arch opening. The proscenium, which projects as a shallow arc into the auditorium, also has a face of vertical beaded boarding. On each side of the stage is a door to the backstage areas, two low ceilinged areas (the upper stories of the projections) flanking the higher stage area. The walls of the stage and the flanking spaces are of horizontal beaded boarding. The low sections are also ceiled with beaded boarding, but the stage area itself has received a ceiling of modern composition panels.

The grounds of the Academy are largely grassed. To the west is a semicircular paved driveway which leads to the front door of the building. The lawn within the driveway is broken only by a flagpole, and a few trees. Some shrubs and trees are found around the building and along the southern boundary. To the rear of the building are some picnic tables, and a skating rink--basketball court, surrounded by a low plywood wall. The eastern boundary of the property is marked by a small brook, and a small pond created by a stone and concrete dam.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1894-1895 **Builder/Architect** Bodwell and Sargent, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Gilmanton Academy is significant in the fields of education and architecture--in education as a well preserved late 19th century academy, and in architecture, as a fine example of the early Colonial Revival style.

History - The present building is actually the third building of the Gilmanton Academy, which was chartered on June 20, 1794, and opened in 1797. The two previous Academy buildings on the same site both burned, the first in 1808, the second on Sunday morning, May 20, 1894. The second building was completely destroyed, along with virtually all of the property of the Academy, as only a piano and a few books were saved from the fire. The school, however, continued. Classes were held in the principal's home. And, at a mass meeting of the local citizens on Monday evening, the task of raising money for a new building began. The fund raising campaign was immediately successful, some \$1500 being pledged in the first week. The Concord architectural firm of Bodwell & Sargent donated its services, preparing plans and specification for the new building free of charge. The firm's design was presented to the Academy trustees and approved by them in July. On August 3, the contract for the construction was awarded to the builders Messrs. Gardner Cook & Son of Laconia, for "the very low figure" of \$5800.¹ (As the younger member of the Laconia firm was a trustee of the Academy, the school apparently received special consideration.) Construction began four days later. The basement was finished by the end of August, and the roof was being shingled in mid-October. When the Academy winter term began on January 8, 1895, the first floor was ready for occupancy. By the end of the month, the building was "all complete from top to bottom except the stage furnishings".² but, the formal dedication did not take place until June 20, 1895, when it became the highlight of the Academy's centennial celebration, which had been sadly postponed after the fire.

Although the Academy survived the fire, it could not survive the changes in New Hampshire's educational system. The small town academies, like the Gilmanton Academy, could no longer compete with the new public high schools or with the better endowed private boarding schools. The last Gilmanton Academy graduation was held in 1910. In 1915, a final attempt was made to revive the private school, but it proved unsuccessful.

The Academy building continued if the Academy did not. The March, 1916 Gilmanton School District meeting voted to establish a public high school. And the Academy trustees agreed to lease the Academy building to the school district for the use of the new school. (In 1948, the trustees, recognizing that the private school would never be re-established, gave the property and the remaining Academy funds to the school district.) The Academy building was used as a public school, first as a high school and later as an elementary school, for fifty years, from 1916 to 1966, when a modern elementary school replaced it. In 1967, the building was transferred from the school district to the Town of Gilmanton. It is now used in part for an historical museum, and for occasional social functions.

¹Academy Record (Gilmanton, 1894), Vol. VII, No. 4, p. 5.

²Laconia Democrat, February 1, 1895.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.157

Quadrangle name Gilmanton, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	9	3	0	4	6	0	0	4	8	1	0	6	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
n/a			

state	code	county	code
n/a			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Ruell

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date March 12, 1983

street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171

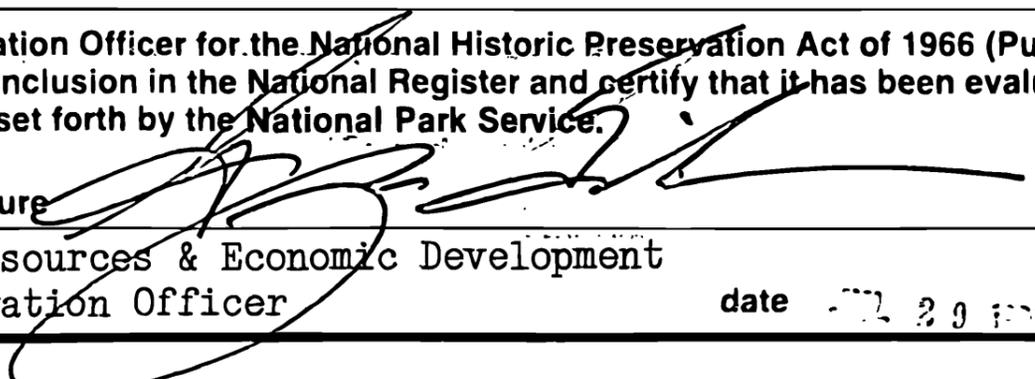
city or town Meredith state New Hampshire 03253

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

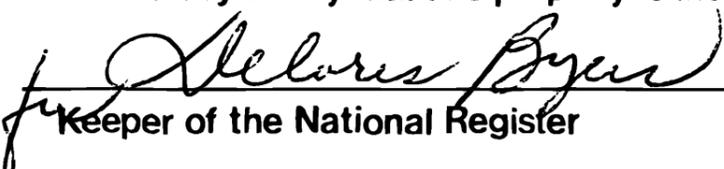
Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/29/83

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/8/83

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Education - The Gilmanton Academy is a fine example of what was once a common building type in 19th century New Hampshire, the small academy housed in a single building. The private local academy was the basic institution of secondary education in the state before the Civil War. Eight academies, including Gilmanton Academy, were chartered in the late 18th century. In the first half of the 19th century, academies were established in virtually every important town. By 1850, there were ninety-two private secondary schools operating in New Hampshire. In the first two decades after the Civil War, a few more academies were founded. But the academy system was beginning to decline as new public high schools were opened. Between 1885 and the First World War, the public high school system grew rapidly, but, virtually no new academies were established. A state law of 1901 requiring school districts to either establish public high schools or pay the tuition of students wishing secondary education, marked the end of the academy system. The few academies to survive became either private boarding schools, or in a few cases, the local public high school, in function, if not name. Most of the small academies, like the Gilmanton Academy, were closed. The Gilmanton Academy building is therefore unusual among the surviving Academy buildings in that it dates from the last decade of the 19th century, during that period of decline which saw few new academy buildings constructed. Although no complete study of the state's academy buildings has been made, it is clear that the Gilmanton Academy was one of the last to be erected by a small New Hampshire academy.

The Gilmanton Academy building is quite well preserved. The architects' plans, elevations and sections still survive. Only minor departures from the plans were made during construction--the relocation of the front stairway, and a few changes in ornament, such as the design of the transom window above the main entry. So, it is possible to see how little the building has been altered since 1895. There has been only one important change--the combination of the two northern classrooms into a single room. Most of the other notable changes were made to meet modern fire codes--the fire escapes and the partitions at the end of the central hall--and new standards of hygiene--the conversion of one closet to a restroom and the division of a cloakroom to create two more restrooms. Some deteriorated elements, such as the outdoor concrete and wooden steps, have been replaced. Basically, however, the building appears today as it did when it was dedicated in 1895, a virtually intact example of the late 19th century academy.

Architecture - Little is known about the work of the Concord firm of Bodwell & Sargent. Partically the only available source of information on the partnership of Albert E. Bodwell (1853-1926) and Charles E. Sargent is a short autobiographical sketch written by Bodwell in 1895 when he joined the N.H. Historical Society. Bodwell stated that the partnership was formed in June of 1892. He mentions only four buildings as the work of the partners--two Concord residences, a small Shingle Style church in Laconia, and the Gilmanton Academy. The partnership appears to have been short lived, as the last mention of the partners in the annual Concord city directory appeared in 1897. But if the history of the firm is obscure, (as is the history of most 19th century New Hampshire architects), the quality of their work is clear in the well-designed Gilmanton Academy.

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According to the Academy Record, the student magazine, "the design of the architect and all interested was to secure a building which should conform to the colonial style of architecture, and thus be in keeping with the other buildings in town ...".³ Certainly, the Academy building fits in well with the late 18th and early 19th century homes of Gilmanton, a well-preserved and picturesque early New England village. The choice of the Colonial Revival style was also influenced by nostalgia for its predecessor, according to a Laconia newspaper which announced the design as "a building of colonial style which the old alumni would like nonetheless because of its suggestion of the old academy".⁴ The new building's belfry with its open octagonal cupola was "almost an exact reproduction of the old one"⁵ that had stood on the roof of the earlier Academy building. Otherwise, the new building was more complex in its form and more elaborate in its ornament than its predecessor--a relatively simple building, rectangular in plan, two stories high, covered by a hip roof with a central belfry. The earlier Academy's only ornament had been the fanlight and pediment above the doorway and the octagonal cupola of the belfry. A comparison of the two buildings thus illustrates the character of the early Colonial Revival style, which was still influenced by the aesthetics of the Victorian era. In the 20th century, the Colonial Revival style would become more academic and "correct". But, in its early years of popularity, the late 1880's and the 1890's, the style still reflected the Victorian interest in complex forms and lavish ornament. The Gilmanton Academy illustrates the transition from the Victorian aesthetic to the academic Colonial Revival style. It is symmetrical with a compact form, but the building's massing is not as simple as that of its prototypes. Although a small building, the Academy is divided into distinct sections covered by no less than five different roofs. The Academy's ornament is not as lavish as that of many Victorian buildings, but it is much richer than that of any early American school building. Bodwell & Sargent used the vocabulary of the "colonial" styles with a freedom that would later disappear, as architects became more knowledgeable and concerned about the "correct" usage of the early American styles. But, as the Academy demonstrates, correctness is now substitute for character. The designers could have the building more "correct" by simplifying the form, eliminating, for example, the projections flanking the pavilion; and by deleting the incorrect ornament, such as the oversized round window above the main entry. But the Academy would have lost much of its charm and vitality in the process. Certainly, the Gilmanton Academy is an attractive and dignified building, well suited both for its setting and its function as a major public building.

³Academy Record, p. 1.

⁴Laconia News & Critic, June 20, 1894

⁵Academy Record, p. 2.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Continuation sheet #6 - REFERENCES Item number 9 (& 10-below) Page 1

Academy Record (Gilmanton, 1894) Vol. VII, No. 4 (Note: Although this issue bears the date "June, 1894", it is obvious from the contents that it was actually published in August or September.).

ANNUAL REPORT OF TOWN OF GILMANTON (Laconia, 1916, 1917) for years ending February 15, 1916, and February 15, 1917.

Bodwell, Albert E. "Biographical Sketch", dated March 19, 1895, in "Biographical Sketches of New Hampshire Historical Society Members" (manuscript, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H.).

Bodwell & Sargent, Architects "Gilmanton Academy Building, Gilmanton, N.H., July 12th, 1894" (plans, sections and elevations--manuscript, Town of Gilmanton, Gilmanton Town Hall, Gilmanton Iron Works, N.H.).

Ehrensperger, Harold, THE FIRE BETWEEN THE FIRES, A BRIEF HISTORY OF GILMANTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE, ACADEMY (Gilmanton, 1973).

Laconia Democrat, May 25, June 1 & 22, July 6, 20 & 27, August 3 & 31, September 7 & 28, October 26, November 16, 1894; January 4, 18 & 25, February 1 & 15, May 24, June 28, 1895.

Laconia News & Critic, May 23, & 30, June 6 & 20, October 17 & 31, November 28, December 12, 1894; February 13, 1895.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: Verbal boundary description & justification:

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as a heavy black line on the accompanying map entitled "Gilmanton Academy, Gilmanton, N.H." It includes the Gilmanton Academy building and the lot on which it stands. (The lot somewhat irregular in shape, fronts on Province Road.) The property is shown on Gilmanton Tax Map 26, but as it is town owned, has not been assigned a parcel number. This parcel is that which has been associated with the Academy since it was first constructed and is all the property associated with the building.

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Gilmanton Academy Gilmanton, N.H.

