

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Josiah Bartlett House

AND/OR COMMON

Josiah Bartlett House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER West side of Main Street (Route 111)
opposite Town Hall

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Kingston

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Hampshire

033

Rockingham

015

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Gertrude E. B. Wilson

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street, P.O. Box 54

CITY, TOWN

Kingston

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Hampshire 03848

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rockingham Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Rockingham County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Exeter

STATE

New Hampshire

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Hampshire Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

in progress

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS New Hampshire Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Concord

STATE

New Hampshire

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Josiah Bartlett House stands on a well-kept 2-acre houselot on the west side of Main Street (Route 111) in Kingston, New Hampshire. To the east is a portion of the Kingston common and beyond it the town hall. The 2-story Victorian building immediately to the south is now the Fremont Furniture House. A small shopping center is located immediately to the north. At the rear of the houselot are some 20 acres of open field and woodlot which once belonged to Bartlett and are still the property of his descendants.

The original section of the present Josiah Bartlett House was constructed in 1774 after fire destroyed the first house on the same site. It is a 2 1/2-story frame and clapboard building measuring some 49 feet wide and 35 feet deep (5 bays by 2 bays). Two interior chimneys break the gabled roof at the ridge line. The windows--6/6 double-hung sash--are flanked by louvered blinds. Sometime during the first third of the 19th century a 2-story gable-roofed wing some 20 by 39 feet in size was constructed at the southwest (rear) corner of the main house and a 1-story open porch (now screened) was added to its southern side. During the same period Greek Revival detailing was applied to the house; these elements include giant pilasters at the corners, cornices above the first-floor-front and the side windows, the pilasters and cornice at the main entrance (center of the east elevation), and the square columns which support the porch.

The main section of the house follows a four-square plan with two rooms on either side of a central hall. The hall itself is divided into front and rear sections, each containing a staircase set against the right (north) wall. To the left (south) of the hall are the living room and dining room; the latter was once the kitchen and its wide fireplace and related implements are still intact. On the right of the hall are the parlor and a bedroom. The chimney for these two rooms and the parlor fireplace were rebuilt about 1860; the closets that originally flanked the parlor fireplace were remodeled at that time into the existing arched alcoves.

There are four bedrooms on the second floor, again divided by a central hall; that at the southeast corner served as Bartlett's office. The wing contains a kitchen and work rooms on the first floor and four bedrooms on the second. The original wide-board floors remain in place throughout the house. A gable-roofed frame and clapboard barn is attached to the rear (west) of the wing and a one-story wooden garage extends south from the side of the barn.

The Bartlett House appears to be structurally sound and in good general condition. Though the house is furnished for the use of its present residents, some pieces owned by Bartlett remain in place. A small Queen Anne table, a desk, medical cabinet, and surgical instruments were saved from the fire which destroyed the first Bartlett house. Items acquired by Bartlett for the present house include a highboy, grandfather's clock, and the dining room chairs. The linden tree which stands on the front lawn was brought by Bartlett from Philadelphia.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☒ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☐ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1774-1795

BUILDER/ARCHITECT not known

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Due to the voting order in the Continental Congress, Josiah Bartlett of Kingston, New Hampshire, was probably the first delegate to vote for independence, the second to sign the Declaration of Independence (after Congress President John Hancock), and the first to vote for and sign the Articles of Confederation. A physician by profession, and founder of the New Hampshire Medical Society, Bartlett also served as chief justice of New Hampshire and was the State's first chief executive under the Federal Constitution.

The only extant building closely associated with Bartlett is the 2 1/2 story frame house with gabled roof which he constructed at Kingston, New Hampshire in 1774. Bartlett built the house after fire destroyed his earlier home on the same site and lived there until his death in 1795. Though given some Greek Revival detailing during the early 19th-century, the house retains much of its original character. Furnishings include a number of Bartlett pieces, among them the doctor's desk, medical cabinet, and instruments. Still owned by descendants of Bartlett, the house is used as a private residence and is not open to the general public.

Historical Background

Josiah Bartlett was born on November 21, 1729, at Amesbury, Massachusetts. He was educated in the common schools and at the age of 16 began the study of medicine in the office of Dr. Ordway, a distant relative. Five years later, in 1750, Bartlett qualified as a physician and began practice in the town of Kingston in southern New Hampshire. He quickly won a reputation not only as a general practitioner but also as an experimenter and innovator in diagnosis and treatment. In 1754, he married his cousin, Mary Bartlett of Newton, New Hampshire, by whom he had 12 children.

While developing his practice, Bartlett was also active in politics. He served as representative to the provincial assembly from 1765 to 1775 and was a justice of the peace and colonel in the militia from 1767 to 1775. In 1774 Bartlett became a member of the New Hampshire Committee of Correspondence and of the first provincial Congress, which came into being when the royal governor disbanded the colonial assembly. He was elected that same year to the Continental Congress but was kept from attending when his house burned to the ground. It was rumored that "revenue agents" or "agents of the King" were responsible for the fire but Bartlett never ascribed to such accusations. Bartlett immediately constructed a new house (the present Bartlett House) on the site of the home that had been destroyed.

Bartlett attended the Second Continental Congress in 1775-76, serving at the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Colby, James F. "Josiah Bartlett" in Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. II (New York, 1929).

Eastman, Anne M. and Charles W., Josiah Bartlett of Kingston: Two Views (Kingston, 1975).

Fields, Elizabeth and Dr. J.E. "The Signers Lived Here," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, May, 1951.

Works Progress Administration, American Guide Series. New Hampshire, A Guide to the Granite State (Boston, 1938).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 332325 4755575
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Boundaries of the national historic landmark designation for the Josiah Bartlett House are those of the roughly rectangular 2-acre Bartlett houselot as owned by Gertrude E. B. Wilson, bounded easterly by Main Street 255 feet more or less; southerly by land occupied by the Fremont Furniture House 339 feet more or less; westerly by additional land of Gertrude Wilson 283 feet more or less; and northerly by a local shopping center 333 feet more or less. (Note: Specific dimensions are taken from a survey map in the possession of the current property owner; no other map of the houselot was available.)

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 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by Charles W. Snell Historian

6/21/71

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

202/523-5464

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

District of Columbia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

Landmark
LOCAL
Designated: Nov. 15, 1971

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 designated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

11/24/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS)

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same time on New Hampshire's Council of Safety. Though he rarely participated in congressional debates, whose seeming futility irritated him, he sat on various committees. Bartlett was again elected a congressional delegate in 1777 but was too exhausted to attend. However, in August of that year he was able to lend his medical skills to General John Stark's force of New Hampshire militia and Continental troops. They defeated a predominantly German element of General John Burgoyne's command in the Battle of Bennington, one of the reverses that helped to force the British surrender two months later at Saratoga. Bartlett returned to Congress in 1778-79, after which he refused reelection because of physical exhaustion.

Though Bartlett had no legal training, New Hampshire appointed him chief justice of the court of common pleas in 1779. He became associate justice of the superior court in 1782 and then served as its chief justice from 1788 to 1790. In 1788 Bartlett had taken part in the New Hampshire convention that ratified the Federal Constitution, which he vigorously supported. He declined election to the United States Senate the following year, probably on account of his age and the weight of his judicial duties, but in 1790 he accepted the position of chief executive-or president-of the State. He held that title until 1793-94 when he was named governor, as the newly amended New Hampshire constitution redesignated the position.

Despite all his political activity, Bartlett did not lose interest in the field of medicine. In 1790 Dartmouth College conferred on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. The following year he secured from the legislature a charter for the New Hampshire Medical Society which, when organized with a constitution and by-laws drafted by his own hand, elected him its first president. In 1794 ill health forced Bartlett to retire from public life. He died at his Kingston home on May 19, 1795, and was buried in the cemetery of the Kingston Universalist Church.

Though given some Greek Revival detailing during the first third of the 19th century, the Josiah Bartlett House retains much of its original character. Furnishings include a number of Bartlett pieces, some of which survive from the first house on the site, including the doctor's desk, medical cabinet, and instruments. The house is still owned by Bartlett's descendants and maintained in good condition; it is not open to the general public.