

ENGINE COMPANY NO. 1
Between 26 and 28 South Main Street
Franklin
Merrimack County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-221

HABS
NH
7-FRANK,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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LOCATION: Between 26 and 28 South Main Street, Franklin,
Merrimack County, New Hampshire.

USGS Franklin, New Hampshire Quadrangle,
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
19.284835.4813030.

PRESENT OWNER: City of Franklin, New Hampshire

PRESENT USE: Storage.

SIGNIFICANCE: Engine Company No. 1 is a contributing element to
the West Franklin historic district. The building,
erected in 1870, exhibits elements of vernacular Greek
Revival architecture characteristic of civic buildings
constructed during the mid-nineteenth century.

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The fire house was erected in 1870 (Nadeau 1978).
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: References are to deeds and other documents in the office of the Registry of Deeds, Merrimack County Administration Building, Concord, New Hampshire.

1869 Deed, 3 September 1869, Book 198, p. 476. Alonzo Messer to the Town of Franklin.
4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: Builder J.K. Woodward constructed the firehouse at a cost of \$967.80 (Nadeau 1978:15).
5. Original Plans and Construction: No plans or documentary evidence of the building's original appearance have been located.
6. Alterations and Additions: No alterations have been made to the plan or design of the building. The primary alterations since the original construction include application of asphalt shingle siding, addition of roll doors, and a poured concrete floor in the first story.

B. Historical Context

The town of Franklin was incorporated in December 1828 from adjoining portions of four towns (Salisbury, Andover, Sanbornton and Northfield), largely at the behest of those wanting to exploit more fully the manufacturing potential present along the lower Pemigewasset and Winnepesaukee rivers and tributaries thereto (Hurd 1885:310-311).

At the time of incorporation, the principal village then in existence was located on the west bank of the Pemigewasset. This small community had risen around the activities of Ebenezer Eastman, who after coming to this area from Concord in 1797 established a dam and sawmill on Chance Pond Brook, opened a tavern, and commissioned construction of a toll bridge across the Pemigewasset on the road to Sanbornton and Northfield in 1802 (Hurd 1885:310; Nadeau 1978: 8). At the time, the village was part of the town of Salisbury, and was called variously Pemigewasset or "East Village", the latter due to its location within that town (Farmer & Moore 1823:232). In 1824, four years before the creation of the town of Franklin, the village of Pemigewasset boasted a meetinghouse, two stores, a tavern, post office, tannery, several cooper shops and a

blacksmith shop. The village's industrial activity was concentrated primarily along Chance Pond brook, which flowed from the "great pond in Andover" (Webster Lake) southeast to the Pemigewasset a short distance above what is now Webster Street. Along the brook were, in 1824, three sawmills, a grist mill, and a blacksmith shop "with trip-hammers" as well as one unspecified "manufacturing establishment" (McClintock 1880:133).

The major industrial development of Franklin ultimately centered on an area to the east, known as Franklin Falls, on the Winnepesaukee, bringing with it a concentration of commercial and residential activity. However, the village on the Pemigewasset, also known as "West Village" and Franklin, remained a distinct and viable community through the 19th century. Not only did it have its own, nearby mill privileges, but also the Boston & Maine railroad, which extended its line north to the village in 1846; in addition, due to its location at a major river crossing, it was able to reap economic benefits from passing travelers. In 1855, the community called Franklin still remained the town's "principal village", with two hotels, seven stores, two meetinghouses (Congregationalist and Christian Baptist), a fire house, and an academy (McClintock 1880:133). Its industrial base, as of 1858, included a tanney, forge, foundry, grist mill and wool carding mill (Walling 1858).

By 1880, fourteen firms were listed with premises along Chance Pond Brook, including a sawmill, grist mill, iron foundry, brickmaker, carriage manufacturer, knitting machine factory, needle factory, and wool dyer (McClintock 1880: 137-138). Although the village never boasted the rows of attached brick commercial buildings which were built along Central Street in Franklin Falls, it did have several detached "blocks" from which local merchants purveyed goods and services, such as the brick Pike's Block, Messer's Block, and the Sturtevant Block (Sanborn 1884; Hurd 1892). From such premises, as well as from small building containing both shop areas and residences, the merchants of Franklin village offered such items as boots and shoes, harness and wagon robes, groceries and "India goods", hardware, furniture, and the all-encompassing "general merchandise" (McClintock 1880:140).

As Franklin Falls became more heavily industrialized, and urbanized in the later 19th century, Franklin retained its village character and informal, linear plan along Main Street. Manufacturing tended to cluster in its traditional location along Chance Pond Brook toward the north end of the village, and the south end was primarily residential; between and within these areas, however, the mingling of function (housing, religion, commerce, public services) persisted, although most of the commercial activity was oriented around the west end of the bridge and north to Webster Street (Sanborn 1884, 1892).

Franklin was incorporated as a city in 1894; this change in municipal status was reflected in the village primarily by its designation as "West Franklin". In the 20th century, with

the rest of the city, West Franklin experienced industrial and population decline as manufacturers closed or relocated their operations elsewhere. In April 1931, the old covered bridge across the Pemigewasset, known as the Republican bridge and built in 1839 by Boston John Clark to replace the earlier structure, was dismantled, its timber removed by the city for other uses, and the stone of its piers laid along the riverbanks as riprap. The new bridge, erected by the Eastern States Bridge Company of York, PA and Concord, was named the Daniel Webster bridge by vote of the city council (Franklin Journal Transcript, 16 April 1931, 30 April 1931; City of Franklin, 1930).

The parcel of land for Engine Co. No. 1 was purchased from Alonzo Messer in 1869 to replace the existing West Franklin engine house, which had become inadequate. Engine Co. No. 1 was Franklin's first fire battalion, established circa 1831 to protect the residents on the west side of the Pemigewasset River (Nadeau 1978:8-9). At the time the new engine house was erected, Engine Co. No. 1 had a force of 50 men who operated a Hunnaman hand-tub engine, purchased in 1853. In addition to the Hunnaman Engine, the company's equipment included: "a 5 inch cylinder with hose carriage, 350 feet of leather hose, 24 feet of suction hose, buckets, axes, belts, spanners, lanterns and rubber clothing for the two leading hosemen" (Nadeau 1978:15). Horsedrawn fire apparatus were acquired by the Franklin Fire Department shortly thereafter, but it is unclear whether Engine Co. No. 1 was equipped with one of the new carriages (Nadeau 1978:33).

The Franklin Water System was established in 1891, and seventy hydrants were installed throughout the city. The new water system encouraged the switch from hand-pumped fire equipment to steam engines that could feed from the city hydrants. It was at this time that the Hunnaman Engine, purchased in 1853, was replaced by a steam engine (Nadeau 1978:81). At least one automobile truck was added to the city fire department as early as 1912, but the first record of a motorized vehicle for Engine Co. No. 1 occurred in 1930 when the City Council approved the purchase of a 1 1/2-ton Reo engine (Nadeau 1978:109). The engine remains in the possession of the Franklin Fire Department, and at the time of recordation was housed in Engine Co. No. 1 undergoing restoration.

II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The vernacular Greek Revival style of the free-standing Engine Co. No. 1 is conveyed by the wide frieze panels and cornice returns of the front gable building.

2. Condition of Fabric: The building is in fair condition, due to neglected maintenance in recent years.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions: The single block of the two-story engine house has a rectangular massing two bays by three bays, measuring 23 by 31 feet.

2. Foundations: The engine house rests on a foundation of large rubble stone, patched in places with poured concrete. The building is constructed into sloping ground. A large patch of concrete in the center of the rear foundation wall suggests that there may once have been exterior access to a cellar beneath the building.

3. Walls: The walls are sheathed with asphalt shingles applied over clapboards. The clapboards remain exposed on the north wall.

4. Structural Systems: The engine house is framed with sawn dimensional lumber.

5. Porches, Stoops, etc.: None present.

6. Chimneys: A small, interior, brick chimney stack is located at the rear of the building just north of the roof ridge.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors: Two large rolling garage doors fill the first story of the facade. The northern door is slightly smaller and contains a hinged mandoor.

b. Windows: Window openings are regularly spaced around the building. 6/6 double-hung sash fill the openings. The first story openings on the south wall have 2/2 wooden storm windows. Any decorative surrounds have been obscured by the subsequent application of asphalt siding. A triangular, metal vent is located in the west (front) gable peak, and an unfilled opening is located in the east gable peak.

8. Roof:

a. Shape: Engine Co. No. 1 has a front gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles.

b. Cornice, Eaves: The eaves are highlighted by wide frieze panels below the boxed eaves and cornice returns in the gable ends.

c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers: None present.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: See floor plans for existing room configurations. The first floor of Engine Co. No. 1 is undivided. The enclosed staircase begins in the northeast corner and extends half the length of the room along the north wall. A small bathroom was constructed below the stairs at some later date. A large open room dominates the second floor. However, a partition in front of the chimney separates a small alcove from the open floor. Access to the unfinished attic is gained from the alcove.

2. Stairways: An enclosed staircase covers the eastern half of the north wall. While the interior is sheathed with beaded wainscoting, the exterior has pressboard walls.

3. Flooring: The second floor retains its original wide board floors, while the flooring of the first story has been replaced with poured concrete.

4. Walls and Ceiling Finish: The original wall and ceiling surfaces of the first floor have been obscured by the application of pressboard. However, both the second story walls and ceiling are finished with wallpaper applied over plaster, on riven lath. Water leakage has damaged portions of the second story ceiling.

5. Openings:

a. Dooways and Doors: All of the doorways are framed with plain plank surrounds. Two doors in the stair enclosure provide access to the staircase and the bathroom below the stairs. Both of these are salvaged sections of vertical beaded board. Doors in the second story are four-panel wooden doors. Two of the three have lacquered wooden knobs set in cast brass escutcheon plates.

b. Windows: All of the windows are framed in plain plank surrounds.

6. Decorative Features and Trim: The lack of decorative elements in the first story of Engine Co. No. 1 bespeaks its original industrial function. The most notable feature of the engine house is the coved ceiling on the second floor. Wallpaper covers ceiling as well as the walls. The remaining decorative features include the door hardware which were standard stock items in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating: Stove thimbles are found in the chimney of the first and second stories, and metal floor vents in the second story suggest that the building may have been modified for a central heating system.

b. Plumbing: All plumbing fixtures are modern.

c. Lighting: Electric light sockets are suspended from the ceilings of both stories. However, no original fixtures remain extant.

D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation: Engine Co. No. 1 is located on the east side of South Main Street, south of the intersection with Central Street, in the West Franklin village of the City of Franklin. Most of the surrounding buildings reflect the nineteenth century character of the village and the city, and presently serve a variety of residential and commercial functions.

2. Landscape Design: The engine house has no designed landscape. The area in front of the building is paved with concrete to facilitate the access of fire apparatus to the building. Behind the building the ground slopes sharply down toward the river bank.

3. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings associated with Engine Company No. 1.

III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Hurd, D.H. & Co.

1892 Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire. D.H. Hurd & Co.,
Boston.

McClintock, John

1880 "Franklin, New Hampshire", Granite Monthly 3 (January), pp. 132-143.

Nadeau, Andrew N.

1978 History of the Franklin Fire Department. Privately printed.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Co.

1884 Fire Insurance Map of Franklin, New Hampshire. Sanborn Insurance Co.,
New York.

1892 Fire Insurance Map of Franklin, New Hampshire. Sanborn Insurance Co.,
New York.

1929 Corrected

to 1954 Fire Insurance Map of Franklin, New Hampshire. Sanborn Insurance Co.,
New York.

Shephard, Alice M.

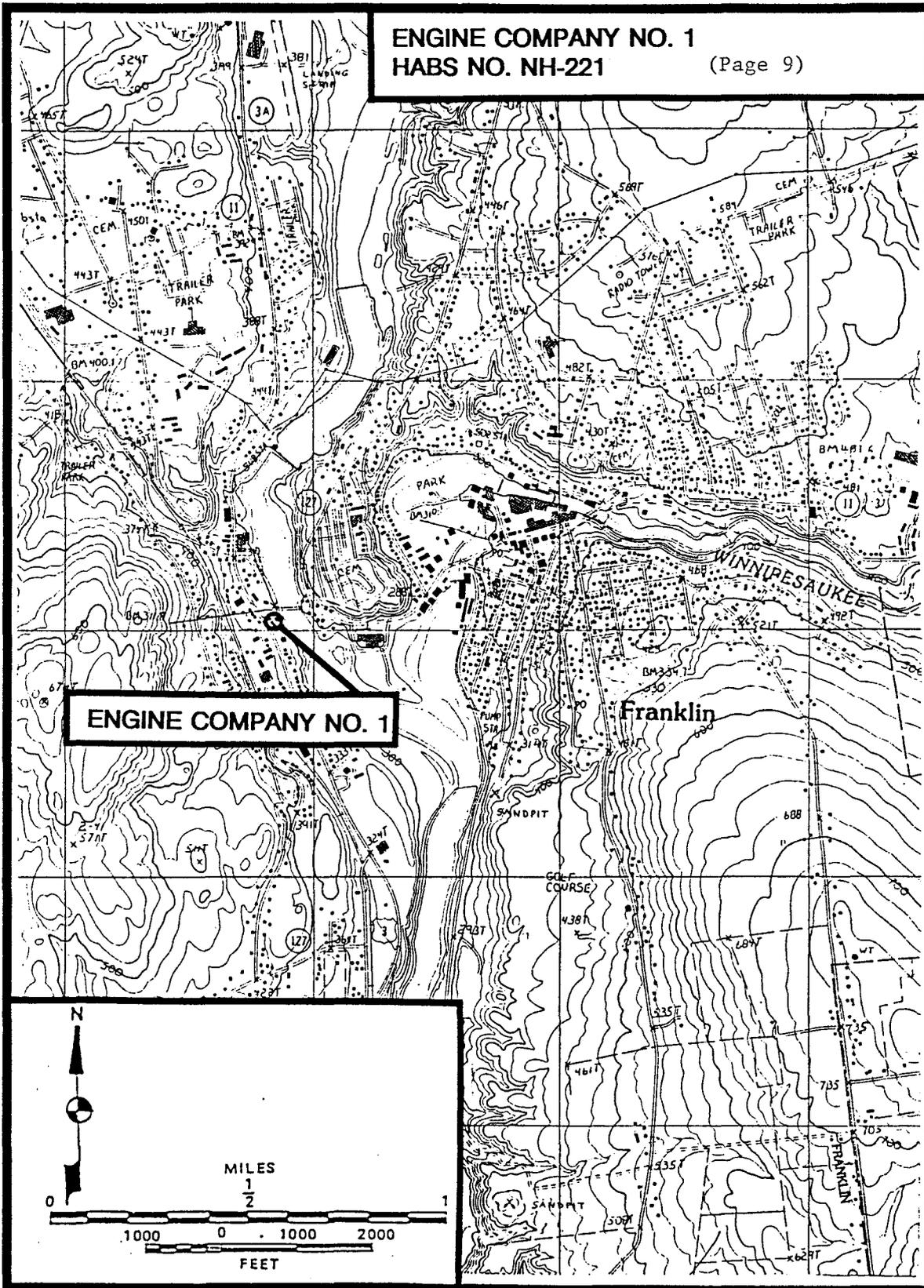
1957 "History of Franklin, New Hampshire." unpublished manuscript, on file at
State Historical Society Library, Concord, New Hampshire.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

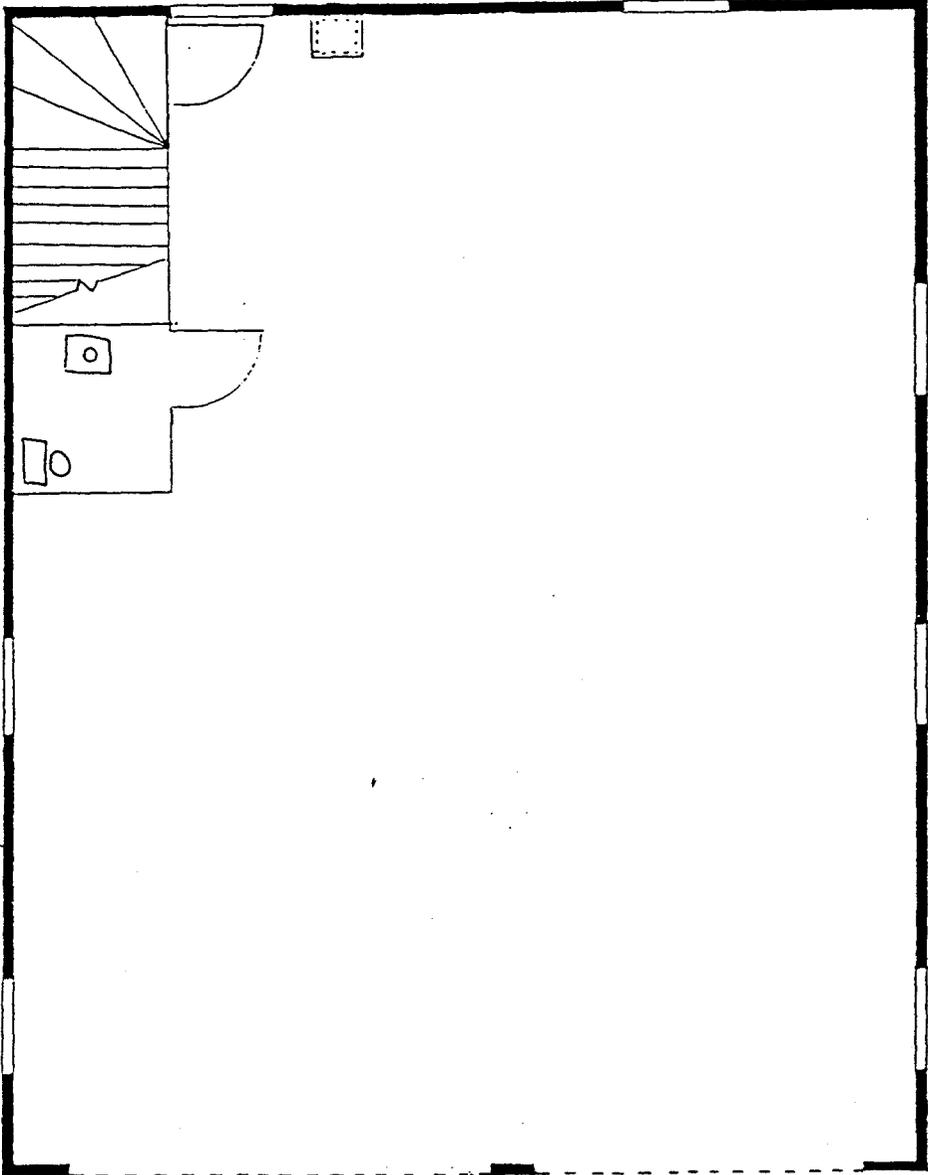
Engine Co. No. 1 was recorded in October, 1991, by the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., East Orange, New Jersey, for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, Concord, New Hampshire. The documentation was undertaken pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The project for which the MOA has been prepared is the replacement of the Daniel Webster Bridge over the Pemigewasset River and redesign at the intersection of Central Street with Main Street (U.S. Route 3). The project team included: Martha H. Bowers, Project Coordinator; Elizabeth Rosin, Architectural Historian; and Rob Tucher, Photographer.

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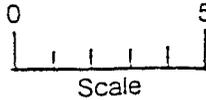
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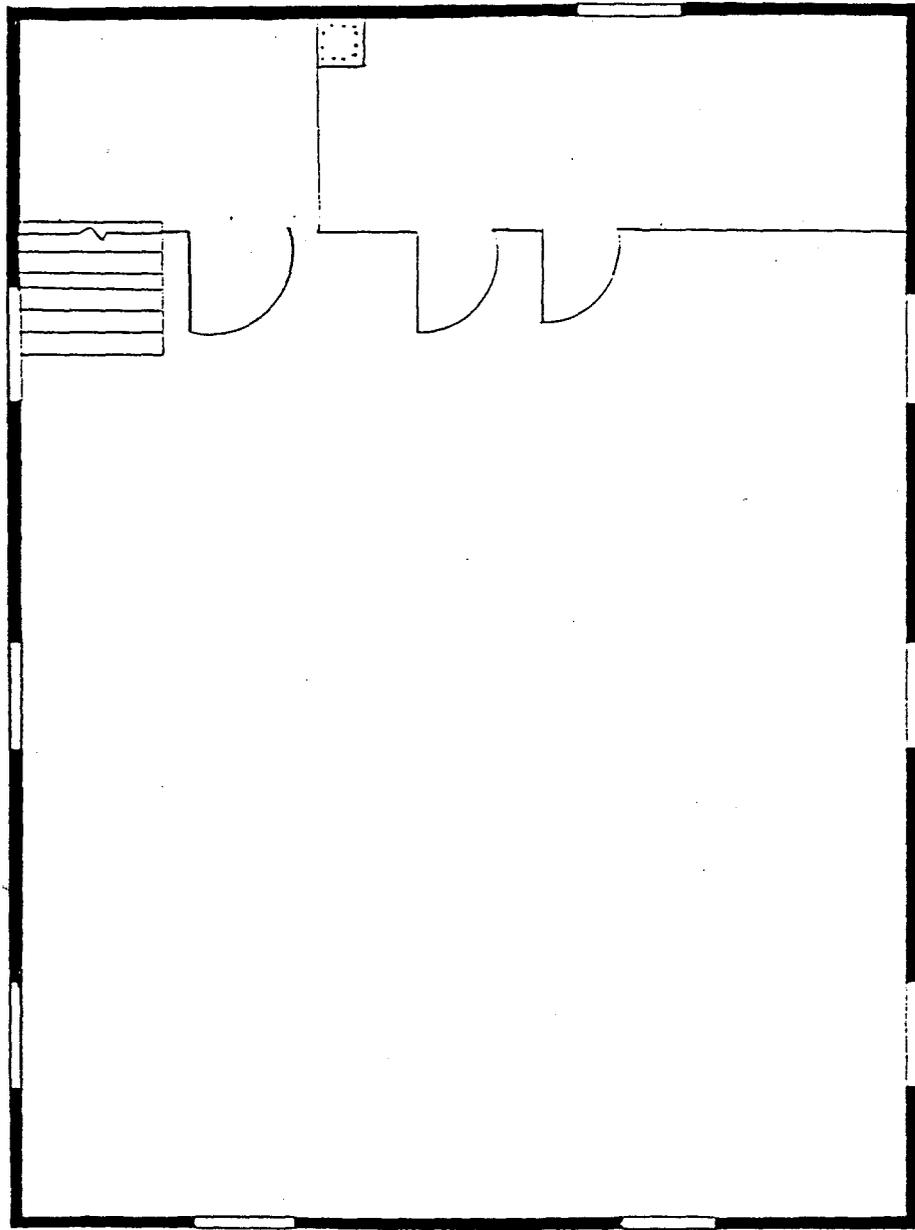


SOURCE: USGS 7.5 Minute Series Franklin, N.H. Quadrangle
(Preliminary Edition 1987)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN





SECOND FLOOR PLAN

