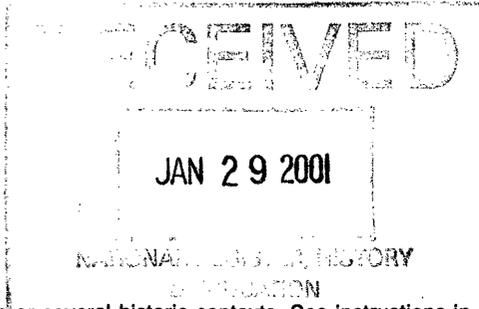


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



COVER

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Religious Trends, 1615-1950

C. Form Prepared by

name/title VT Div. for Historic Preservation, University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program
organization _____ date 1997/revised 1/2001
street & number See continuation sheet telephone (802) 828-3046
city or town Montpelier state VT zip code 05620

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Elsa Gilbertson, National Register Specialist
Signature and title of certifying official

January 22, 2001
Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Elsa H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

3/2/2001
Date of Action

per

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E1 - E6
F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	F1 - F20
G. Geographical Data	G1
H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	H1
I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I1 - I3
Primary location of additional data:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Historic Preservation Office <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency <input type="checkbox"/> Local government <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Name of repository: _____	

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number C Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in VT
Form Prepared By

Form Prepared By:

Elsa Gilbertson, National Register Specialist
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620
(802) 828-3211
1997 and revisions 11/2000

Initial historic context, "Religious Trends, 1615-1950," was written by Susannah Clifford

University of Vermont Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Paul Austin
Carol DiNinno
Diane Dolbashian
Rogan Faith
Aimee Finley
Patricia Foster
Todd Hannahs
Ann Lattinville
Steven Melanson
Lee Moffitt
Jim Moran
Barbara Shubinski
Paul Wyncoop
Katie Wollan

University of Vermont
History Department
Wheeler House
Burlington, VT 05405
(802) 656-0577
May 1997

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number E Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

Religious Trends, 1615-1950

Prior to European exploration of Vermont, religious history belongs to the Native American populations who have inhabited the region for over 10,000 years. Many of their religious customs were nearly destroyed in the 17th century due to the combined factors of arrival of European explorers, beginning in 1609 by the arrival of Samuel de Champlain on the lake bearing his name; population loss, in large part due to disastrous epidemics in 1616-17 and the 1630s; and missionary activities of the Jesuits.

The first Christian services in what was to become the state of Vermont may have occurred as early as 1615, when a Catholic missionary was said to have performed services for Abenaki groups in northwestern Vermont. Other missionaries later gave Catholic services to the Abenaki when they traveled through Vermont, and over time a large number of Native Americans converted to Catholicism. In 1666 the French built a chapel at Fort St. Anne on Isle LaMotte, an island in Lake Champlain near what is now the Canadian border. The chapel was for Father Dollier de Casson, a Sulpician from Montreal, who had come that winter to care for a group of sick soldiers. The chapel was probably the first Christian building constructed in Vermont. Although the chapel itself is no longer standing, its site is marked by a shrine constructed in 1898. Another chapel was built at an unknown date on Lake Champlain near the mouth of the Otter Creek, in present day Ferrisburgh. In the southeast section of Kellogg's Bay a Jesuit button and other artifacts were found.

For the next hundred years the Catholic Church continued to serve the scattered outposts in the area. In 1700 a group of Jesuits built a stone chapel in Swanton for the local Catholic Abenaki population. With the departure in 1759 of the French from Vermont after the end of the French and Indian War, the Catholic Church in effect also left and did not return for another 70 years.

After 1760, as peace returned briefly to the Green Mountain wilderness, Vermont's first permanent Euro-American settlers began to make the trek north from their homes in southern New England and New York. These settlers were overwhelmingly of Protestant heritage, with their faiths being divided among various denominations and sects. Town charters set aside land for the first settled minister and occasionally a congregation built and maintained parsonages to attract ministers to their town.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

By the time of the American Revolution, at least four churches had been organized in Vermont. The Congregational Church, founded in Scrooby, England, in the 1580s, came to Vermont when a church was organized in 1762 in what is now Old Bennington. They built their first meeting house in 1766, and was used until 1805 when it was replaced by a new Federal style church designed by Lavius Fillmore. The first Vermont Episcopal Church was organized in Arlington in 1764. The Baptist Church was organized in Shaftsbury in 1768. After 1780 the Baptist Church grew rapidly in Vermont, and at one point Shaftsbury had four churches. Scottish Presbyterianism, the fourth church organized in Vermont, was brought by an early group of Scottish immigrants when they settled Caledonia County in the 1770s.

When Vermont became an independent republic in 1777, towns were granted the power to levy taxes in the inhabitants to support the church of the first settled minister. In some towns, residents rushed to establish the first church to benefit from this tax. Local church matters, including where and how to build a church or meetinghouse, were decided upon in town meeting by the voters, be they church members or not. In 1807 a law was passed that separated church and state and abolished the practice of town taxation for religious purposes. Townspeople could still be taxed for the maintenance of the "town house" where town meetings and "social worship" services could both be held.

As the earliest years of settlement in a town were a struggle--to eke out a living and to attract new settlers, it was often ten or more years before a church could be built and a minister supported. Services often were held in private homes or barns. Where the first church would be located sometimes was a matter of contention, as community leaders wanted it in what would become the main village of a town. Some would argue for its placement in the geographical center of a town (regardless of topography), while others, especially early industrialists, argued for the village that was developing around the mill sites on the major falls in a town.

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Vermont experienced population growth and residents in many towns began thinking seriously about providing for public education and opportunities for public worship. New religious groups also appeared. The Society of Friends, founded in England in 1625, was organized in Vermont in 1780 in Danby by its many Quaker settlers from the Nine Partners, New York, area. Monthly meetings were established in a number of other towns, including Monkton, Starksboro, Lincoln, Ferrisburgh, Mount Holly, Montpelier, and Grand Isle. About 1780 Mary Appleton, the former housekeeper of John Wesley (founder of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

Methodism in 1729), held the first Methodist meetings in Vermont in the town of Bradford. The first Methodist church was built in Danby about 1793. The Free Will Baptists, which split off as an anti-Calvinist offshoot from the Baptists in 1780, first appeared in Vermont in the Strafford in 1793. Rev. Charles Bowles, who was half black, formed several Free Will Baptist congregations in Vermont in the 1820s, including one in Starksboro.

The Universalist Church may have come to Vermont as early as 1774 when a church reportedly was organized in Wells. A second church was organized in Barnard in 1794 by the Rev. Hosea Ballou, one of the fathers of Universalism. In the 19th century, this denomination became widespread in Vermont, particularly in Washington, Windham, and Windsor counties.

Unitarian and Christian churches were organized in the early 1800s. The Christian church was founded by Abner Jones in Lyndon in 1801, and although it never became widespread it has the distinction of being the first church founded in Vermont.

By the early decades of the 19th century many towns were settled enough to support at least one, if not more, churches and denominations. Vermont historian Tom Bassett described the effects of this "denominational constellation" on the Vermont landscape:

By the 1830s the principle of voluntary support and competition between denominations was symbolized by the landscape featuring several steeples in the centers, and in smaller places, a different church in each hamlet. In Thetford, for example, the Methodists were at Post Mills, Congregationalists at Thetford Hill, Universalists in the North Village.

These decades were also a time of some upheaval--economic dislocations after the War of 1812, a spotted fever epidemic, the year 1816 with a killing frost every month of the growing season, flooding, insect blight, and the start of westward migration. Religious life in Vermont reflects this unsettled time as churches throughout the state experienced dissension and loss of members to more radical splinter groups. At the same time untiring Congregationalist, Methodist, Methodist Episcopal, and Society of Friends missionaries, itinerant pastors, and circuit riders rode large distances, bringing the Gospel to far flung settlements and maintaining their religious organizations. Some denominations also established schools. Methodists started a seminary in Pawlet in 1803 and another in Newbury in 1834. The Baptists established a number of academies in the 1830s--in such towns as Manchester, Brandon, Townshend, Ludlow, and Derby

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 4 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

Center. After the Vermont Episcopal Diocese was established in 1832, John Henry Hopkins, the first bishop, established a boy's school. A theological seminary was added in 1837.

Among the radical splinter groups that emerged were the Pilgrims, the New Lights, the Millerites, and the Perfectionists. The latter two gained the largest following. William Miller of Whitehall, New York, and Poultney, Vermont, prophesied that according to the Bible the Millennium was scheduled to occur in 1843. His prophecy spread quickly, attracting a large number of followers throughout the northeast. Millerites sold their worldly goods in readiness for the day of judgement. When the day came and went, Miller lost most of his believers. Some Millerites remained ardent and joined with another Millennialist church to form the Adventist church, which flourished in the latter half of the 19th century. Perfectionism, founded by John Humphry Noyes of Putney, was based upon the belief that the Second Coming had already arrived and that people were now able to perfect themselves here on earth. Noyes established a religious commune where women were treated equally with men and laws of marriage were abolished. The Perfectionists' beliefs and practices regarding sexual freedom eventually led to their expulsion from Vermont, whereupon they fled to Oneida, New York, where they established the Oneida community.

Religious revivals also swept Vermont during this time, and missionary activity grew to a fevered pitch. No church was left untouched by revival fever and irreparable schisms developed in some. By the late 1840s and 1850s, much of this religious fervor had been channeled into social and political reform movements such as temperance and anti-slavery.

One of the more unusual religious developments of this time was Spiritualism, a quasi-religious movement centered on the ability of people who were "mediums" to communicate with the dead. The movement began in Arcadia, New York, in the 1840s. Many of the leaders were women, most notably, Achsa Sprague (1827-1862) of Plymouth Notch. Sprague, a transmedium, lecturer, and writer, who was also active in reform efforts, spoke extensively around the eastern United States in the 1850s on positive thinking and spiritual healing. Her books were well-known. Other nationally known spiritualists were the Eddy brothers of Chittenden, Rutland County, Vermont, who began holding meetings and seances in their farmhouse in the 1870s. Other spiritualist mediums traveled around the state and new England giving lectures and seances in churches, town halls, and other meeting places. Although spiritualist practitioners continued into the 20th century, the movement by then had begun to wane and was widely discredited.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

The Catholic Church returned to Vermont in 1830 with the installation of its first permanent Catholic priest. It grew tremendously when a large number of French Canadian and Irish Catholics began immigrating to Vermont mid-century to work on the railroad, on farms, and in mills and factories around the state. In 1850 the first French-speaking parish in New England was established in Burlington. In 1853 the Vermont Catholic Diocese was formed, with Rev. Louis de Goesbriand as the first bishop.

Other denominations appearing in Vermont in the second half of the 19th century were brought by immigrant groups. They include Swedish Lutheranism, Welsh Presbyterianism, Greek Orthodox, and Judaism. Many of the early immigrant churches were much like those of the early settlers. Services were frequently held in houses. Halls were also rented until enough money was raised to build or purchase a church buildings. Many groups, particularly the Catholics, also established their own schools so classes could be taught in their native language, students could receive religious instruction, and cultural traditions could be preserved. Classes were often held in church basements until a separate school could be built.

Churches also began developing societies and organizations, such as relief missions, orphanages, and homes for unwed mothers, that provided assistance to their parishioners and to the community. They held such secular fund-raising activities as church suppers, plays, and meetings, which often were held in church basements. By the 1870s some churches were adding kitchens to their basements or wings, ells, or separate parish halls to house these activities. Permanent stage platforms were constructed in some church basements to support plays, pageants, and programs of traveling missionaries.

Around the 1880s when outdoor recreation was becoming a popular activity throughout the country, religious organizations began establishing camps and retreat centers. In 1880, for example, a group of Spiritualists bought the Central Vermont Railroad's Queen City Park in Burlington to use as a summer conference center. Other religious camps and retreat centers included: the Baptists at Gove Hill in Thetford, Methodists at Camp Missisquoi since c.1880, Quakers at Farm and Wilderness Camps in Plymouth since 1838, Episcopalians at Rock Point in Burlington, Second Day Adventists at White River Junction since 1887, and the Vermont Church Council at Buck Rock.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number E Page 6 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950

World War I and the Depression brought a new wave of millennial enthusiasm, prompting the establishment of new religious groups, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Assembly of God, the Church of God, Church of Christ, Southern Baptist, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Some of the long established churches in small towns, which struggled to survive due to declining populations and economic factors, folded or services were held in them only a few times each year. Churches no longer used for religious worship sometimes were sold to other denominations or the private sector and turned into garages, barns, storage sheds, residences, town halls, community halls, gymnasiums, retail markets, or businesses. Others were taken over by local historical societies or other groups whose mission was and continues to be the preservation of these buildings that are of architectural and historic significance to their communities.

Many of Vermont's historic churches still in use as houses of worship are well taken care of by their congregations. Since 1985 churches have been eligible to apply annually for restoration and preservation funding from Vermont's State Historic Preservation Grant program. Numerous church projects have been funded.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

I. Property Type: Church

II. Description

Church buildings, found in almost every Vermont town, are the physical evidence of the history and patterns of religious and architectural practices in the state, New England, and the nation from the time of first permanent Euro-American settlement in the late 18th century to the present day. Some also tell of Vermont's civic life, having been built to house governmental and educational uses. They are among the most prominent buildings in each town, constructed on small lots facing village greens, in village centers, as centerpieces of residential neighborhoods, anchoring commercial districts, or located on rural parcels serve more remote congregations.

Churches in Vermont in the historic period range in style from vernacular and unadorned to high style Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, Neo-Classical, Neo-Gothic, and Colonial Revival or a mixture of several styles. They are built of wood, brick, or stone and may be small one story buildings or large structures with several stories and bell towers, steeples, or ornate spires. What they all have in common is at least one large open space for services and meetings.

1770s to 1790s

During the early republic and statehood years of the 1770s to the 1790s, church services often were held in private homes, barns, or taverns. One of the earliest acts of official business in many towns was the construction of a meeting house. This was a Town matter because in 1781 Vermont passed a law, permitted by a clause in the state constitution encouraging public worship, that gave Towns the authority to levy a tax for the construction of a meeting house. The law in its first incarnation was repealed in 1782, and in 1783 a new law was passed granting exemption from the tax for those who did not belong to the church body. Towns frequently set aside ministerial lots for meeting houses and parsonages. These meeting houses usually were built for both religious and secular purposes. Voters discussed the matter of building a meeting house at Town meetings. Building committees were appointed to carry out the projects and in many towns residents decided to model their buildings on houses of worship they were familiar with in their home states (mainly Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number F Page 2 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

In some Vermont towns, particularly very small ones, several denominations joined together to build one church (usually called a union church) that they shared. They often drew up agreements that clearly spelled out when each denomination could use the building.

The common mid to late 18th century meeting house of northern New England was a rectangular, post and beam, clapboarded building with the main entrance in the middle of the long eaves front and Georgian style detailing. The Rockingham Meeting House, begun in 1787 and completed in 1799, is an excellent example. The pulpit, usually elevated and reached by steep steps, was on the long rear wall directly across from the main entry. Boxed pew seating was on the main level, often with more seating in a gallery running along sides and rear of the space. Stairs leading to the gallery were outside in enclosed extensions called porches on one or both gable ends or in a corner inside the building.

1790s to 1830s

By the early 1800s the meeting house form gradually evolved into what is recognized as the common church form: a rectangular shape with a gable front entrance and tower integrated into the main body of the church. These towers and steeples were used in Massachusetts and Connecticut a number of years before they appeared in northern New England. The 1792 West Wardsboro Baptist Church (Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey # 1319-1) in Wardsboro is a good example of the transitional period between the eaves front entrance form and the gable front with tower form. This church has its main entry in the middle of the eaves front wall, which is facing the road, but on the gable end is a tall, four story, projecting tower block topped by a belfry (probably a later addition). There is a secondary entry in the tower side wall facing the road.

The 1799 Strafford Town House (located in the Strafford Village Historic District, listed in the National Register on June 20, 1974) shows the further transition to the gable front form. The Town House has a gable front orientation with a projecting tower block providing access to the main floor and gallery. Inside, the pews face the gable end where the pulpit is located. This form was utilized by Charles Bulfinch for churches in Massachusetts and popularized by Asher Benjamin in his "Designs for a Church" in his 1797 book, *Country Builder's Assistant*. Benjamin, from Greenfield, Massachusetts, is known to have lived for a time in Windsor, Vermont. Through Benjamin's publication and the work of other influential architects, the gable front rectangle became the common church form for churches in Vermont built around and after the turn of the 18th century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 3 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

Vermont churches built from the late 1700s until about 1830 were built of post and beam construction with clapboard siding or load bearing brick and were in the **Federal style** or plainly detailed. There is one known stone church from this time period still standing--a large, simple, two story structure in Poultney built in 1822 by the Methodists. Two known churches have brick veneers, but they are domestic in appearance--the Georgian plan Ira Baptist Church (c.1810) and the two-story sidehall plan Pawlet Methodist Church (1826). Among prominent church designers and builders of the time were Asher Benjamin, Lavius Fillmore of Middlebury, Elisha Scott of Poultney, and William Sprats of Litchfield, Connecticut, who was buried in West Haven, Vermont. In high style churches, the main door is often flanked by secondary doors in the outer bays. Entryways are topped by elliptical arches and fanlights, with Palladian windows on the second floor over the central door. Sometimes there are Palladian or round-arched windows in the back wall above the pulpit. Delicately carved detailing such as pilasters, dentils, modillion blocks, and fretwork trims wall surfaces. These churches usually have multi-stage, open belfries or steeples with lavish ornamentation. Churches in smaller or less affluent towns were simpler but with some of the same types of details.

From the outside these churches are tall with a two story appearance, but the interiors originally had one open space with the second floor windows lighting the galleries. Two rows of monumental columns or posts support the ceilings and the galleries. Walls and ceilings are plaster, with molded plaster ceiling details, cornices, or medallions on high style buildings. There may be board wainscoting and some secondary walls covered with boards. Trim on early churches may be relatively plain with simple moldings, but high style buildings usually have elaborately carved or planed trim—cornices, window and door surrounds, and on pews and pulpits. Some early pulpits had elaborately shaped and paneled sounding boards hanging above. Pews are built in, may or may not be painted, have paneled ends, and pew doors. Churches usually were heated with a wood stove or stoves in the back of the sanctuary and long stove pipes running the lengths or widths of the building.

Excellent examples of high-style Federal churches are the Old Congregational Church in the village of Old Bennington (town of Bennington), designed by Lavius Fillmore and built between 1804-05 at a cost of \$7,793.20 and his masterpiece, the Middlebury Congregational Church, built in 1806-09 at cost of \$9,000. The elaborate detailing on the front facades of both churches includes Palladian windows, quoins, dentils, and a large fanlight above the main entrance. A large number of joiners worked on the Middlebury church, and likely spread the use of Federal architecture throughout the region after its completion. Examples of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 4 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

influence of the Middlebury church can be seen in the later and simpler Federal style churches in Sudbury (1807), Monkton (1811), and Hinesburg (1826). Another excellent example of a high-style Federal church is the 1817 Congregational Church in Norwich. The building has an ornamented clock tower, belfry and spire as well as a slightly projecting portico with Tuscan columns. The gable front is pedimented, as is the portico, and there is an elliptical arch window in the tympanum of the portico pediment. The design is thought to have been derived from church designs in Asher Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant* or the *American Builder's Companion*.

1830s to 1860s

In the late 1820s a new style--the **Gothic Revival**--was introduced to Vermont by the 1826 construction of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Middlebury. The style, in various forms, continued in popularity for churches into the early 20th century. Based on the European Gothic architectural style, the Gothic Revival coincided in the United States with both the Romantic, back-to-nature movement spearheaded by the Hudson River School, on a secular, popular level, and with the Second Great Awakening on a religious level. Through efforts by Episcopal missionaries from England and the American branch of the Episcopal Church, the style was popularized in New England in the early 19th century and eventually gained national popularity.

In surveying existing Gothic Revival churches in Vermont, locations seem to coincide with areas of economic prosperity. The earliest examples usually appear in wealthy agricultural regions and commercial centers from the late 1820s-1850s, with later examples often located in larger industrial villages and cities. The first Gothic Revival church in Vermont was St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, built in 1826-27 in the mill town and county seat of Middlebury. Its minister, Rev. B. B. Smith, was the editor of *The Episcopal Register*, which urged Episcopalians to build churches that imitated English country churches and chapels--"snug, low, Gothic structures, with massive walls of rough, unhewn stone, adorned with a few plain windows, and a decent humble tower, and calculated to accommodate the worshipers of twenty generations." Middlebury master builder Lavius Fillmore was on the building committee and is known to have designed the original interior, since changed. St. Stephen's was built of stone with a monumental square tower, pointed arched windows, and large, heavy wooden doors. It is very similar to a church that had recently been built in Lynn, Massachusetts, another mill town with which Middlebury businessmen (especially mill owners) had connections. The second Gothic Revival style church in Vermont was St. James Episcopal Church in Arlington, built of stone in 1829-30 and designed by British architect, William

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 5 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

Passman, who had just finished a nearly identical church in Troy, New York. The stone is dressed, there is a projecting bell tower with wooden tracery and pinnacles, and pointed arch windows.

The Gothic Revival style began its significant spread in Vermont in the 1830s. One of the most important architects influencing Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture in Vermont and indeed other parts of the country was Bishop John Henry Hopkins, who moved to Vermont in 1832 to become the first bishop of the newly established Vermont Episcopal Diocese. In 1836 he published the first American-authored book on Gothic Revival architecture, *Essays On Gothic Architecture*, which he had begun in 1831 while in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He recommended the Gothic Revival style for churches of all sizes and complexity because "there is no other style which admits such variety, which is so beautiful on any scale, and which is so little dependant on size for effect. . ." Hopkins also designed several Vermont churches, including St. Thomas' in Brandon in 1863 and the Trinity Church in Rutland of 1865. St. Paul's in Burlington was destroyed by fire in the 1970s.

Another important designer and builder by the 1830s was John Cain of Rutland. He used the common gable front Federal period form and detailed the churches with pointed arch windows and pinnacles atop the belfries. John Cain and his brother William also sold Gothic arched windows from their shop in Pittsford. Among his works are the 1835 Pittsford Congregational Church in brick with large quarrel-paned pointed arch windows and wooden tracery ornamenting the second floor tower window; the 1838 Danby East Village Union Meeting House with its wooden siding, roof finials, iron cresting, and pointed windows; and the 1841 St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Wells. It appears that Cain's style for Gothic Revival churches attracted some notice as a number of similar churches were built in the late 1830s and into the 1840s around the area. Examples include the Union Meeting House in Ferrisburgh, Starksboro Village Meeting House, and the brick Methodist Church in Hinesburg (destroyed by fire in the early 1900s).

Mid to late 1830s and into the 1840s Gothic Revival churches usually had a gable front form, pointed arch windows, and wooden pinnacles or crenellation atop square belfries. In some of the simpler churches regular flat topped windows or flat windows crowned by pointed arch, wooden fans. Others were Greek Revival style (see next section) with classic corner and wall pilasters and entablatures but with arched windows or trimmed with Gothic pinnacles on the belfry.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 6 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

Interiors of Gothic Revival churches varied. High style Episcopal churches sometimes have elaborate carved Gothic rood screens. Other high style churches have pointed arch niches or inset chancels. Ceilings may be plain plaster or crossed with wooden beams or trusses that are both structural and ornamental. Walls usually are plaster and sometimes are stenciled. There may be some board wainscoting. Windows have Gothic trim in imitation of stone columns or are surrounded with classical Greek Revival molding. Pews are often simply paneled with straight lines. Some have pew doors and straight tops across the ends, while the ends of others have simply curved tops.

Many of Vermont's Gothic Revival efforts attempted to affect the Gothic feeling and ideal with limited funds and resources in the form of alterations to existing Federal, Greek Revival or vernacular style churches and meeting houses. This was often done through the addition of architectural features such as windows and doors with gothic arches, and belfry additions, including crenellation and pinnacles. Examples of these types of alterations include the 1817 Second Congregational Church in West Townshend that was given overlays of Gothic Revival detail in 1839 and 1848; the South Londonderry Baptist Church, originally a brick Federal style building built in 1834 that was altered with Gothic Revival elements in 1855; and the 1807 Federal style church in Sudbury that was remodeled for a town hall in the 1850s and given bristling pinnacles.

During and after the Civil War the Gothic Revival style continued to be popular. Some of the later important examples in Vermont were Catholic churches, built in response to the increasing population of Catholic Irish and French Canadians who started arriving in Vermont in large numbers by the 1840s to work on the railroad, farms, and in the mills and stone quarries. Brooklyn, New York, architect Patrick J. Keely designed Catholic churches all over the United States, including at least three in Rutland County: St. Bridget's, built in West Rutland of marble in 1860-61 by Irish marble workers who labored in the quarries all day and labored on building their church at night; the marble St. Patrick's in Wallingford, built in 1865-66; and St. Peter's Church in Rutland, built in 1871 with rough marble walls, corner tower, pointed arch windows and doors, all trimmed by smooth marble blocks of a lighter color.

The **Greek Revival** style was introduced to Vermont about the same time as the Gothic Revival. One of the first churches in Vermont with elements of the style is St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Windsor, built in 1822. It was designed by prominent Boston architect Alexander Parris, who would design the Quincy Market building in Boston three years later.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 7 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

This brick building has such Federal style details as round arched windows and an elliptically-arched window in the gable peak, but also has the columns in antis and brick corner pilasters that would become popular features of the new Greek Revival style.

The Greek Revival style was wildly popular in Vermont from the 1830s to the 1870s. It spread into Vermont mainly through builder's handbooks that laid out construction and design guidelines and through the influence of important master builders. The pattern books helped rural builders who may have had little exposure to good standing examples in their remote locations. In particular, Asher Benjamin published many pattern books that embraced the Greek Revival style, providing designs for Greek Revival style churches in *The American Builder's Companion* in 1827 and *The Builder's Guide* in 1839.

Common characteristics of Greek Revival churches in Vermont are a rectangular shape with the main entrance in the center of the gable front (temple front) wall. The frames are commonly post-and-beam. Exterior walls may be clapboard, brick veneer or load-bearing brick, or stone. The temple fronts may have a two-story or monumental porticos and sometimes columns in antis. Columns or posts are wood or brick covered with stucco. The gable pediment may be closed or open with cornice returns. The main entrance is usually framed with a classical entablature and pilasters. Other stylistic details include pilasters at building corners, on the walls, and around doors; and classically detailed entablatures. Windows, with trabeated lintels, range from six-over-six double hung sashes to thirty-over-thirty sashes. Some windows are even triple-hung with multiple glazing units.

Belfries, located on the roof ridge near the front of the building, are usually four-sided with louvered panel inserts that protect the bell and interior while also allowing the bell to be heard when rung. Some are domed, with detailed columns on the corners, while others have flat or shallow hipped roofs and detailed with pilasters. Steeples are rarely found in this style.

Architectural patternbooks also provided details on church interiors. Most have plaster ceilings and walls, perhaps with board wainscoting to chair rail or window sill level. Some walls may also have wall and corner pilasters. Ceilings may have elaborate plaster medallions or classical plaster or wood cornices. Many churches have choir lofts or balconies across the back of the sanctuary (over the one story front hall); if so the balcony wall may be treated with a full entablature. Windows and doors have wooden surrounds, perhaps eared or with straight or peaked lintels. Pews often are simply paneled with scrolled tops at the ends. The front of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 8 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

the sanctuary may be accentuated by wall pilasters or columns and entablatures or elliptical arches framing a shallow recess.

A highly unusual and stylish Greek Revival style church in Vermont is the First Congregational Church of Burlington, built in 1842 by Henry Searle. Six fluted Ionic columns support the shallow pitched pediment, but most extraordinary of all is the belfry—a six column open colonnade that is a copy of the Choratic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens. Another excellent Vermont example of a Greek Revival style church is the brick Orwell Congregational Church, built in 1842. As per the instructions of the building committee, the design inside and out was based on Asher Benjamin's plate 59 in 1839 of his book, *The Builder's Guide*. It was built by the firm of Bostwick and Fobes, Frederick Bostwick coming from Orwell and Mr. Fobes from Crown Point, New York. The only major difference between the plate and the church as built is that the Orwell church is four bays deep rather than five. The Congregational Church in the neighboring town of Shoreham, designed by local builder James Lamb and built in 1846, clearly was influenced by the Orwell church. Some detailing is similar, especially on the interior, but the exterior design has been changed resulting in less elegant lines and proportions. The roof is a slightly steeper pitch than common on churches of the time and there is a monumentally scaled entrance porch consisting of four fluted Doric columns that support a projecting, flat-roofed segment of a full entablature.

By the 1840s some towns began to use church basements as meeting spaces for such secular functions as town meetings and schools. These spaces had separate entrances, clearly separating the roles of church and state. By the mid 1800s, some churches were losing or had lost their congregations, and it became fairly common for towns to either convert older church buildings into town halls (an example being the 1830 Pittsfield Methodist-Episcopal Church that was moved to a new location to become the town hall in 1859) or to divide churches with open two story sanctuaries into two separate floors, one for the church and the other for the town hall. Examples include Athens (converted in 1860) and the 1821 Weathersfield Center Congregational Church (divided in 1861). Other churches, looking for more space, divided their two story high spaces so there would still be a relatively high-ceilinged sanctuary (on the upper floor) and a vestry or parish hall on the first floor. An example is the Monkton Borough Baptist Church, built in 1811 and remodeled in 1854. These conversions sometimes required changes in the original windows, so there would be larger windows lighting the new sanctuary and regular-sized windows for the downstairs. The 1798 Old South Church in Windsor, built by Asher Benjamin, was remodeled in this vein several times in the mid to late 1800s and early 1900s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 9 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

1860s to 1900

After the Civil War new styles such as the Italianate, High Victorian Gothic, and Queen Anne began to appear in new construction. The use of the **Italianate** style for churches emerged particularly in areas with diverse and growing economies. It does not appear to have been embraced by any one denomination. Churches range from those whose architects tentatively experimented with bracketed cornices to far more elaborate buildings employing a full range of Italianate style features such as pronounced towers, round arched windows, heavily detailed window surrounds, and prominent round arched doorways. Most are two stories tall and have gable fronts with clapboard siding over balloon frames, but some are brick veneer or stone. High style churches have intricate towers, a profusion of trim features (such as brackets and elaborate moldings), and stained or colored glass windows.

In two story Italianate churches the sanctuary is usually on the second floor, which has the taller and more elaborate windows. The ground floor spaces, usually very simple in appearance, were and still are used as the parish hall or vestry, for Sunday school, and dining or meeting space. Some lower stories were reserved for use as a town hall, and, in separation of church and state, had completely separate entrances. In the sanctuaries, walls are usually painted plaster and ceilings are plaster, often with molded cornices and medallions. Woodwork is usually molded with rounded forms and varnished. Wooden pews are also molded and varnished, and may be rounded in shape and placed at an angle to the front. The original lighting is often elaborate oil or kerosene lamps mounted on the walls and chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

The 1868 Union Methodist Church in Highgate is a good example of the Italianate style in Vermont. Constructed of brick on a stone foundation, this building's front facade features three massive full arch paired stained glass windows set within full arch brick surrounds with brick corbels; smaller windows of the same form are used along the sides of the church. Rising from the peak of the roof, above the main doorway, is a wooden bell tower, which has three square sections all articulated by evenly spaced brackets.

During this time earlier churches also were remodeled with decorative elements of the Italianate style, particularly eave brackets, which were easy to produce with technological innovations in woodworking. A good example of an early church completely remodeled is the 1823 First Congregational Church of Swanton, which was updated in the Italianate style in 1869 with repairs, a new bracketed cornice, new entry, segmentally arched windows, and new

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 10 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

woodwork inside. Other work ranged from adding stained glass windows to complete remodelings. Stained glass windows, many times memorial windows, were added to a number of churches. Either new sash with the stained glass was added or the old clear glass was taken out of existing sash and replaced with opalescent glass. Examples of churches with later stained glass windows and sash include the 1842 First Congregational Church in Orwell and the First Congregational Church in Swanton. The 1870 Huntington Lower Village Church has its original sash but later colored glass.

The Gothic was particularly influential for church style well into the twentieth century. **High Victorian Gothic** churches in Vermont tend to be concentrated in the larger industrialized towns with prosperous economies. The style was especially popular with the Vermont Catholic Diocese, which built a number of new churches in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Established denominations also used the style to build second generation churches that replaced earlier, simpler, and sometimes smaller structures.

The style is characterized by pointed arch windows and doors, the use of contrasting colors and textures of wood shingles and clapboards or brick and stone to produce bold polychromatic patterns, tall towers with steeply-pitched spires placed either in the center or to the side of the main massing, and often times a rose window or Gothic arched monumental stained glass window in the gable front and gable end. High style churches are usually large in scale. Churches in stone producing areas (marble in Rutland and Bennington counties and granite in Central Vermont) make extensive use of local stone. Interiors may be similar to churches in the Italianate style, but with more elaborate detailing and pointed arch rather than rounded forms.

Two churches, both in Brattleboro, are fine examples of the High Victorian Gothic style in Vermont. The First Baptist Church, finished in 1870 and designed by Elbridge Boyden, has a prominent central tower with an octagonal spire that rises from the bell chamber. The tapering spire is shingled with polychrome patterned slate. There are lancet windows recessed within pointed arch surrounds. The church also has buttressed corner towers with pointed arch entryways in each. The former Methodist Church, built in 1880, features a rose window set in the gable end front facade and a massive, highly ornamented side tower. Another fine example of the High Victorian Gothic style in a small Vermont village is the Georgia Plain Baptist Church, built in 1887 to replace an earlier brick church destroyed by fire. This brick church features a buttressed tower with a steeply pitched spire on the corner of the main block

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 11 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

entrance and a patterned polychrome beltcourse. Smaller wooden examples are characterized by pointed arch windows and may have detailing painted to imitate masonry.

The **Queen Anne** style, the most popular style in Vermont in the decades before the turn of the 20th century, was used to build churches for new denominations in growing industrial or commercial centers or to build new churches for existing congregations. Queen Anne style churches break away from the symmetry of classicism and have irregular massing, towers usually placed off center, and heavily textured walls (either wood or elaborate brickwork). Wood walls are imaginative combinations of shingles, clapboards, and flat or machine carved trim boards, and originally were painted in multiple colors. Such specialty woodwork was readily available from the many water or steam-powered saw and lumber mills around the state. Most have stained glass windows.

Interiors of Queen Anne style churches are usually as detailed as the exteriors. Woodwork is heavily molded and varnished, and sometimes includes decorative beams and trusses. Pews also are richly molded, varnished, and sometimes curved and placed at an angle. Walls may have varnished wainscoting with plaster above. Original paint colors are usually other than white and may include stenciling. Many Queen Anne style churches have large organs with banks of pipes, sometimes decorated.

Two Vermont architects who designed notable Queen Anne style churches were Middlebury's Clinton Smith (Baptist Church, Middlebury, 1881 and Shoreham Universalist Church, 1885) and Montpelier's George Gurnsey (St. Matthew's Catholic Church, South Royalton, 1890 and Ludlow Baptist Church, 1892-98). Unknown builders also constructed churches in the style around the state.

The **Shingle Style** from the late 19th century also was used for some new Vermont churches. Its character-defining element—wood shingles—is often combined with the Queen Anne or Colonial Revival styles. Walls and sometimes roofs are sheathed with wood shingles, which may be imbricated and laid in elaborate patterns. Its use extended into the 1920s, perhaps in part because wood shingles were a plentiful Vermont product. The plan of these churches is widely varied and ranges from the traditional gable end rectangular plan to "L" shapes. Multiple entries are common, as are single towers placed centrally, at the corner on front facades, or in the interior corner of L-shaped plans. A good example is the 1898 Congregational Church in Bristol, with its extensive wood shingling, tower in the corner of the "L," and varied windows including five Roman-arched stained glass windows in rectangular

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 12 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

surrounds on the front façade. The Roman arched pattern is repeated in the tower fenestration and portico brackets. Interiors are similar to Queen Anne style churches.

The **Romanesque** style with its characteristic round arches was used for high style churches in some larger towns and growing commercial centers in the 1870s and 1880s and experienced some new popularity in the early 20th century. The round arch feature often is combined with the buttresses, rose windows, and side towers of the High Victorian Gothic style, which is typified by the pointed arch. Brick Romanesque churches have round-arched windows with projecting lintels and round-arched wall paneling. Stone Romanesque churches are built of local stone—granite and marble—and therefore have a lighter appearance than the dark Richardsonian Romanesque stone buildings. Such churches also have round-arched windows and wall paneling and corner towers or turrets are topped by rounded roofs or other round details. Excellent examples of stone Romanesque churches are the 1881 North Congregational Church of St. Johnsbury, designed by Lambert Packard; the 1905 Memorial Baptist Church in Middlebury, designed by W.R. B. Wilcox of Burlington; and the 1895-1910 St. Mary's Catholic Church in Middlebury, designed by Hopkins and Casey of Troy, New York.

Turn of the 20th Century-1950

Around the early 20th century several styles from earlier periods were revived for the construction in wood, brick, or stone of new churches. European and Canadian influences can be seen on some church architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Burlington, built between 1883 and 1887 of Burlington redstone with Isle LaMotte stone trim, was designed by Father Joseph Michaud of Montreal and is similar to many of the Catholic churches of Quebec from the 17th century on. The Italian Baptist Church in Barre City, built in 1906-08 was designed by its Italian minister and is modeled on Palladian churches of the 1500s. The front is built of granite, the stone that made Barre's fortunes, but the side walls and rear are of brick. The two historic synagogues in Vermont, one in Bennington and the other in Burlington (1885/1902), are simple but are both distinguished by a Star of David in the gable front round window.

The **Gothic Revival** style was updated in the early 1900s as can be seen in several Roman Catholic churches (St. Dominic, 1925, Proctor; Christ the King, 1926, Rutland City; and St. Stephen, 1928, Winooski). These churches are constructed of smooth white marble blocks. They have the common Gothic features such as buttresses and pointed arches, but outside and in these features are very streamlined with little extra articulation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 13 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

The **Colonial Revival** style was used from the early to mid 20th century to remodel older churches and build new ones. Classical features popular in the Federal period, such as Palladian windows, columns, fanlights, and entablatures, were used on a large scale and placed in an unusual way. The Richmond Congregational Church, built of wood in 1903 and designed by Burlington architect W. R. B. Willcox, has Shingle Style detailing in the gable peak with a Colonial Revival-inspired front window: a large round-arched window with shorter side windows at a distance, giving the impression of a Palladian window. A bell tower added in 1911 has dentils under the roofline and classical pilasters holding up the roof on the open bell stage. The 1807 Federal style Woodstock Congregational Church was remodeled in the late 19th century with Colonial Revival features, including a porte cochere on the side. A few other churches made use of a modified Dutch Colonial style. Catholic churches in Bridport (1941) and Danby (1946) are modest gambrel-front, asbestos shingle-sided structures with small buttresses along the side. The 1946 St. Francis Cabrini mission in East Barre village (Town of Barre) also has a gambrel roof but is built of granite blocks from the local quarries. The 1951 Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Williston is a simple building but ornamented with a Palladian window in the gable front and a front portico with classical columns.

Other

As well as high-style architectural church structures, Vermont has a large number of churches that can be characterized as vernacular. The vernacular churches of Vermont are primarily functional structures, exhibiting very little superfluous architectural ornamentation. They date from many different eras and may have some stylistic traits usually concentrated on the front door or belfry that relate them to a period style of American architecture. They usually are gable-fronted rectangular shapes, built of wood, stone, or brick, and often three bays wide with a central door. Examples include the Old Brick Church, built in Fairfield in 1836, and the wooden church in Stockbridge Common of the same year. Quaker meeting houses, such as the 1826/1871 meeting house in South Starksboro (Town of Starksboro), were purposely built simply to reflect the religious beliefs of the Society of Friends.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 14 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

III. Significance

Churches have played a significant role in the formation and development of towns and communities in Vermont and in the shaping the distinctive architectural character of the state. They reflect patterns of settlement, population growth and decline, and economic trends, and are the physical embodiment and public display of local pride and religious convictions. Churches are the places where the important passages of life—baptism, confirmations, weddings, and funerals—have been observed for generations, and as such have deep and lasting meaning. They are the visible symbols of religious faith, showing when and where various beliefs and denominations were introduced, gained hold, flourished, and sometimes declined. Reflecting religious beliefs and practices, their appearances range from the serene simplicity of the meeting houses of the Society of Friends to the richly detailed churches and cathedrals of faiths with elaborate rituals and liturgies. Churches also reflect the economic times of communities, as church members often built the largest and most architecturally distinguished edifices they could afford.

Churches are important public buildings within districts, villages and towns. While their primary use is religious, they also function as places for other public events such as concerts, festivals, and suppers, and for social service activities. They usually are architecturally distinguished and have become important landmarks over time. Their physical character has added distinction to the Vermont landscape. Indeed the exterior appearance of these well-preserved historic buildings are a major part of the Vermont image, and thus of importance over the years in attracting visitors to the state.

Churches generally will be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A and/or C for state and/or local significance. To date two churches in Vermont have been recognized for their national architectural significance and are National Historic Landmarks (Round Church, Richmond, and the Rockingham Meeting House). Under criterion A churches generally will be eligible under the areas of social history, religion, and/or ethnic heritage. Further research may show eligibility under yet other areas of significance. Most churches will be nominated under criterion C and criteria consideration a because of their architectural merit. They will embody distinctive characteristics of the church property type, period, or method of construction, will represent the work of a master, or will possess high artistic values. Because churches are usually located near the historic center of the community, reflecting historic settlement patterns, they also often are eligible for the

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 15 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

National Register of Historic Places as contributing buildings in historic districts. Further research may show some churches are eligible for the National Register under criterion D.

As stated above, churches are significant under criterion A for what they reflect about social history, religion, and/or sometimes ethnic heritage. This significance is outlined in Section E, under the "Religious Trends, 1615-1950" historic context.

Church buildings show development patterns, population trends, and local, state, and national economic trends. They often were the first public buildings constructed in towns. Because such construction was a cooperative effort to serve many people, denominations strove to choose locations they felt would become the main center or village in a town. Churches also show economic trends. Early churches were built when area residents had become enough established that they could afford to donate the needed funding for construction. Larger or more elaborate and finely detailed churches often are found in the county seats or in prosperous farming and industrial communities.

Churches also reflect Vermont's ethnic history. The earliest residents came from other New England states and New York. By the 1840s new settlers who came to work on farms, on the railroad, in the quarries (especially slate and marble), and eventually in the mills were immigrants from Ireland, the Province of Quebec, Canada, and Wales, and they established their own distinctive denominations and churches. By the 1880s Swedish, Polish, Italian, and other immigrants arrived to work in the granite and marble quarries, and also built their own churches. Jewish immigrants from Central Europe settled in the larger cities of Burlington and Bennington, for example, and constructed the two standing historic synagogues in the state.

Churches reflect the growth of religion. As more settlers of diverse backgrounds came to Vermont they brought new denominations with them. The formal separation of church and state also helped foster the arrival or founding of other denominations. Among the most well-known are the Millerites and the Putney Perfectionists, founded by John Humphrey Noyes in 1841 (later forced to move from Vermont, settling in Oneida, New York). The Mormons were founded by Vermonter Joseph Smith and then were led by another Vermonter, Brigham Young.

The earliest churches also reflect the role government had in establishing religion in Vermont. Vermont laws between 1777 and 1807 gave Towns the power to levy taxes on its inhabitants to support the church of the first settled minister. Often the churches or meeting houses

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number F Page 16 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

constructed served both a religious and political function, being places where church services and town meetings were held. In 1801 Vermont passed a law allowing citizens who did not want to or objected to paying this tax the option of not belonging to the church by signing and filing a written statement to that effect. In 1807 a law formally separated church and state, abolishing the practice of town taxation for religious purposes. Even so, in the 1830s and 1840s some new churches in smaller towns with limited resources were built with ample exposed basements. These basements were finished off by Towns for use as town halls or district schools. They had separate entrances at ground level and no interior staircases to the main sanctuary level, thus physically separating church and state.

Churches also are highly architecturally significant as a distinctive property type (see church property type description for more details on styles, materials, and architects). They range from the simple and vernacular to examples of the high-style, architectural distinction. Many were designed by noted master builders or architects. Although they may vary in design and size, churches all share the common characteristic of a central sanctuary and most feature some type of bell tower and steeple, or belfry. What they were built of depended not only on local tastes and the budget, but also what natural resources—wood, stone for walls and slate for roofing, and clay for bricks—were available. Churches built after the 1870s have decorative colored and stained glass windows. Such windows were often added to older churches, many times as memorials to specific people or families.

They are located in prominent positions on town greens, in neighborhoods, on linear village streets, and in rural locations. They are usually on small lots with minimal landscapes. Some have associated cemeteries.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 17 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

IV. Registration Requirements

The physical characteristics and design integrity of churches are as stated in the property type description.

In general, churches will be individually eligible for the National Register because they reflect trends significant to the broad patterns of religious history in Vermont, because of their historic role in a community, region, or the state, and/or because they are good examples of church buildings, an architectural style or period, method of construction, and/or are the work of a master. Churches should retain the characteristic defining form, design features, and materials from the historic period, including historic period changes or modifications.

It is expected that churches will remain on their original sites unless compelling mitigating circumstances have necessitated moving (such as, but not limited to, moving out of a flood plain or wet area or moving back from the road due to road widening). Some churches also may have been moved slightly on their original lots in order to build better foundations. It is acceptable if churches were moved during the historic period. Churches moved after the historic period must meet National Register criteria consideration b.

Many churches have had some modifications over the years in order to keep them in use, provide more space, keep up with the latest stylistic trends, or because of lack of maintenance.

Belfries, bell towers, and steeples are important design features of many historic churches. They are also far more susceptible to deterioration and destruction than any other exterior element of a church, either because they originally were under-structured, poorly designed, built of poor materials, or have suffered from the forces of nature (especially hurricanes, lightning, or the effects of the severe climate) or the lack of maintenance. Churches that have lost their belfries, bell towers, the tops of their bell towers or multi-stage belfries, steeples, or design features on these elements, particularly during the historic period, may still be eligible for the National Register if they retain sufficient historic architectural integrity to otherwise convey architectural and/or historic significance. Losses in the modern period also may be acceptable, except on vernacular churches if the historic belfry, bell tower, or steeple is the main, defining, historic architectural element.

Historic windows and doors, which are distinctive to churches, should be largely intact. It is expected that some will have been changed during the historic period, especially since churches

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number F Page 18 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

were sometimes remodeled in the latest architectural styles. A common historic period change for pre-Civil War era churches was installing stained glass memorial windows in place of the original clear glass windows (either entirely new sash or replacing the clear panes with opalescent glass). Windows have continued to be changed in this fashion in the modern period; this may be acceptable, particularly if the new windows are within the original window openings. It also is expected that some minor or rear windows (such as windows behind the pulpit and basement and cellar windows) may have been blocked off. Historic doors also may have been replaced or new vestibules or entrances added to the front. These changes may be acceptable, except for non-historic changes on vernacular churches where the central door(s) and entryway(s) is (are) usually the main character-defining feature of the building.

Additions to churches that continue(d) to be used for religious purposes may include parish halls, meeting rooms, classrooms, vestibules, and in the modern period elevator towers, handicapped accessibility ramps, platforms, or lifts. If these additions were built prior to the end of the period of significance, they are acceptable unless they negatively affect integrity of workmanship, material, design, feeling, and association. Additions made to active churches after the end of the period of significance may be acceptable if they are compatible in scale and are sensitive to the architectural character and historic integrity of the church. These additions should neither obscure nor be adversely disproportional in size to the historic massing of the building. Non-historic additions, particularly of a large scale, to the front facade are not acceptable.

Conversions of churches to other uses, especially residential or commercial use, may involve the exterior additions of decks, porches, dormer windows, skylights, and vestibules. Such changes, particularly those from after the historic period, should be small in scale and not significantly detract from the historic character or the view from the public way. Additions to the front should not obscure the facade. Small non-historic additions on the rear or on the side walls near the rear may be acceptable. Conversions of churches for use as garages or storage space are more drastic and usually affect the architectural integrity of the building because of the insertion of large garage doors, either on the front or side walls. This kind of change is not acceptable.

Interiors

Interiors are an important character-defining feature of churches and interiors that retain much of their historic architectural integrity add significantly to the eligibility of churches for the National Register. The most important interior space is the sanctuary or main area for worship

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number F Page 19 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

and usually this sense of open space should remain. Other important interior spaces include but are not limited to balconies, galleries, chancels, and naves. Important historic details include but are not limited to woodwork (such as window and door surrounds, paneling, wainscoting, exposed beams, trusses, and rood screens), columns, posts, pulpits, altars, railings, choir lofts or choir sections, pews (such as boxed pews with doors, stationary pews without doors, and moveable pews), organs and other musical instruments, light fixtures (including oil, gas, kerosene, and early electric), walls (such as plaster, plaster with wood wainscoting, pressed metal, or stone), ceilings (such as plaster, wood paneling, pressed metal, and plaster or pressed metal medallions and cornices), flooring, art work (such as stenciling, murals, painted scenes, icons, and carved wood or stone statuary), stations of the cross, baptismal fonts, baptismal tanks for total submersion, historic furniture (such as lecterns, chairs, kneelers, and stools), carpeting, historic finishes (such as paint, wood graining, marbling, varnish, and wallpaper), engraved plaques, painted sayings and scripture passages, wall plaques for listing hymns and/or readings, and historic heating systems (such as wood stoves, furnaces, cast iron registers, and radiators).

Changes made to the interiors of active churches during the historic period include those mentioned in the description section (such as dividing lofty sanctuaries into two floors for more usable space). This type of change is fairly common, especially in the mid nineteenth century, and is acceptable. Interiors also may have been changed by partitioning off small spaces for restrooms, storage closets, mechanical systems, classrooms, or offices. These changes are usually acceptable, providing the sense of the historic open space for worship remains. Other changes, both during the historic period and after, may include adding restrooms, kitchens, heating, ventilation, other mechanical equipment, and accommodation for handicapped accessibility. Such changes that are a result of compliance with state and federal health and safety codes may be acceptable provided they do not significantly detract from the historic architectural integrity.

Changes made to the interiors of inactive church buildings during and after the historic period may include the complete removal of all pews and other religious fittings in order to use the space for other purposes, such as gymnasiums. Several such churches in Vermont have been previously listed in the National Register (Ripton Community House, listed July 3, 1973, and the Ferrisburgh Union Meeting House, listed February 23, 1978) because their exteriors have significant architectural character. Therefore if the historic appearance of the interior of a church building has been seriously compromised, the building may still be eligible for the National Register if its exterior is judged to be of historic architectural significance. Such

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 20 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Property Type: Churches

alterations to churches that are more vernacular and have little exterior detail may not be acceptable because the change would dramatically and disproportionately alter the overall architectural character of the building. If a historic church building has had interior alterations, such as those described above, and has been altered significantly on the exterior, such as by inserting garage or other large doors for conversion of the church to a garage, barn, or other storage space, the church will not be individually eligible for the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number G Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont
Geographical Data

The Geographical Data includes the entire state of Vermont.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number H Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures
in Vermont

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This multiple property listing is based on the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey (VHSSS), which was begun in 1971. This survey generally has been conducted on a town by town basis, starting in the southern part of the state of Vermont and moving northward. While the earliest surveys are considered to be less comprehensive than those done later, most churches that retained their architectural integrity usually were included in the early surveys because of their landmark status within towns.

The historic context, "Religious Trends, 1615 to 1950," on which this multiple property is originally based, was developed as part of the statewide preservation planning process of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The geographic area for this context was determined to be the entire state because trends of religion encompass all of Vermont. Churches were also the first public buildings in many towns throughout the state. The time period for the context is from 1615, the date believed to be when the first Euro-American religious structure was built in what would become the state of Vermont, to 1950, the end of the historic period (as of the date of this MPDF).

The initial property type documented in the multiple property listing is church. Churches were the first public buildings constructed in many towns and played a significant role in their founding and development. The initial typology was based on a 1997 study of a sampling of the VHSSS by graduate students of the University of Vermont graduate program in historic preservation. Surveys of towns in Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, and Windham counties were reviewed to find the historic churches, as were samplings of National Register nominations of churches (either individually listed or in historic districts) throughout the state. The information was then analyzed to develop the property type information.

The standards of integrity were based on the National Register of Historic Places standards for assessing integrity. Information from the VHSSS and knowledge of the condition of existing properties was used to determine the degree to which allowances should be made for alterations and deterioration.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 1 Page 1 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in VT
Major Bibliographical References

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Andres, Glenn M. "Lavius Fillmore and the Federal Style Meetinghouse" in *New England Meeting House and Church: 1630-1850. The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings 1979*. Boston: Boston University, 1979.

Benes, Peter, ed. *New England Meeting House and Church: 1630-1850. The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings 1979*. Boston: Boston University, 1979.

Bassett, T. D. S. "Summary of Religions in Vermont." Unpublished manuscript in possession of author, Shelburne, Vt.

Cheney, Cora. "Early Religions, 1770-1820" in *Profiles from the Past: An Uncommon History of Vermont*. Taftsville, Vt.: Countryman Press, 1973.

Comstock, John Moore. *The Congregational Churches of Vermont and Their Ministry, 1762-1942*. St. Johnsbury, Vt.: Cowles Press, c.1942.

Crockett, Walter Hill. *Vermont: The Green Mountain State*. 4 vols. New York: Century Hill Co., 1921.

Duffy, John J. and H. Nicholas Muller III. *An Anxious Democracy: Aspects of the 1830's*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Folsom-Jones, Charles. "A Short History of the Episcopal Church in Vermont." *Vermont History*. Vol. 21, 1953.

Freeman, Stephen A. "Puritans in Rutland, Vermont, 1770-1818." *Vermont History*. Vol. 33 (April 1965): 342-8.

Haviland, William A. and Majory W. Power. *The Original Vermonters*. Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1981.

Hughes, Charles W. and A. Day Bradley. "The Early Quaker Meetings in Vermont." *Vermont Quarterly*. Vol. 29 (1961): 153-67.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 2 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in VT
Major Bibliographical References

Lunardini, Rosemary. "White River Campground Born in Nineteenth Century Evangelist Revival." *Valley News*. 15 August 1988: 34.

Martin, Eldon H. "Methodism in Vermont." *Vermont Quarterly*. Vol. 22. July 1954: 193-6.

Miller, Gretchen. "Vermont Etherealists." *Vermont History*. Vol. 26. 1958: 17-21.

One Hundred Years of Achievement by the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, 1853-1953. Lowell, Mass.: Sullivan Bros., Printers, 1953

Potash, Jeffrey P. "Welfare of the Regions Beyond." *Vermont History*. Vol. 46. 1978: 109-27.

Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States at the Eleventh Census. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984.

Rothwell, Kenneth S., ed. *A Goodly Heritage: The Episcopal Church in Vermont*. Burlington, Vt.: Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, 1973.

Smith, Gwenda. *The Town House*. Strafford, Vt.: Strafford Historical Society, 1992.

Stone, Arthur. *The Vermont of Today*. 4 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1929.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. *The Historic Architecture of Addison County*. Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1992.

_____. *The Historic Architecture of Rutland County*. Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1988.

_____. *National Register of Historic Places nominations for Vermont*. Montpelier, Vt.: 1971 to date.

_____. *Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey*. Montpelier, Vt.: 1971 to date.

Wilson, Frederick R. "A Vermont Sketchbook: A History of Catholicism in Vermont." *Vermont Quarterly*. Vol. 21. July 1953: 211-19.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 3 Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in VT
Major Bibliographical References

Wodehouse, Lawrence. "John Henry Hopkins and the Gothic Revival." *Antiques*. Vol
103. April 1973: 776-83.