

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

## 1. Name

historic First Free Will Baptist Church Of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham

and/or common First Free Will Baptist Church in Granite

## 2. Location

street & number Granite Road, N/A not for publication

city, town Ossipee N/A vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Carroll code 03

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name First Free Will Baptist Society of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham

street & number c/o Rev. George Miller, President, Star Route, Box 179

city, town East Wakefield N/A vicinity of state New Hampshire

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carroll County Registry Of Deeds

street & number P.O.Box 208  
Route 171

city, town Ossipee state New Hampshire 03864

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Ossipee Historical Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Lakes Region Planning Commission

city, town Meredith state New Hampshire

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved

date N/A

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield, and Effingham is a wooden frame church which stands on its own small lot on Granite Road in Ossipee. The building's form is fairly simple, as it has a rectangular plan and is covered by an asphalt shingled gable roof. The church is clapboarded above a cut granite block foundation. The strong influence of the Greek Revival on the church's design can be seen in the wide paneled corner pilasters (which lack bases, but have moulded capitals), as well as in the heavy box cornice with mouldings and returns on the gables. (The raking cornices have just a deep frieze, while the lateral cornices and the returns have both a frieze and an architrave.)

The three public facades have different numbers of stories, reflecting the internal layout of the building. The three bay wide, southwest gable end facing the road, which is the church's main facade, is two and a half stories high as its doors and windows serve the foyer and the gallery above it. The three bay wide northwest and southeast long facades are apparently only one story high, as their windows light the large auditorium which occupies most of the building and is placed to the rear of the foyer and the gallery.

The exterior is quite symmetrical and consistent in design. The two entries, found in the end bays of the main southwest gable end, are identical--four panel doors with plain side trim and full sidelights, reached by concrete steps, and topped by heavy cornices with plain friezes and large low-pitched pediments. The three windows of the main facade's second story are all six over six sash windows, with plain side trim, louvred shutters, and similar pedimented cornices. Above the central window is a simple, rectangular painted sign in a plain frame with the church's title and date--FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH - 1856. In the gable is found a large, round, single-pane window with a moulded surround. The northwest and southeast long facades each have three large and tall twelve over twelve sash windows with plain side trim, louvred shutters and the same heavy cornices with low pitched pediments. The rear northeast gable end is blank.

The two entries open into the foyer, a simple room having wide board floors, plaster walls with a simple baseboard, and a plaster ceiling. It is lit only by the sidelights of the entries and two modern electric wall lights, all found in the southwest wall. A four-panel door with plain trim in the northwest wall opens into a closet. The two four-panel doors, also with plain trim, opposite the entries in the northeast wall, lead into the auditorium. In the southeast wall are found two more four-panel doors with plain trim. The northern door serves a small closet under the stairs to the gallery. The southern door opens on the plain stairway, which has simple wooden steps and plaster walls. The stairwell is open above, separated from the gallery only by a low wall of horizontal beaded boarding. Like the foyer, the gallery is a plain room with wide board floors, plaster walls with simple baseboards, as well as a simple chair rail on the southwest and northwest walls. A plain trimmed trapdoor in the plastered ceiling opens into the unfinished attic. The gallery is lit by three six over six sash windows with plain trim in the southwest wall. In the northeast wall is a wide, rectangular, plain-trimmed opening, overlooking the auditorium, which can be closed by paneled sliding shutters.

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The auditorium is a large, tall room which occupies most of the building. The floor boards have been covered by carpets in the aisles, but can be seen elsewhere. The walls all have a wainscoating of horizontal beaded boarding, painted with grain-ing and topped by a moulded rail which also serves as the apron and stool for the windows. Above the wainscoating, the plaster walls are painted and broken only by a high moulding, which is interrupted by the window lintels, the gallery opening's apron, and a painted trompe l'oeil "apse" on the northeast wall behind the pulpit. The two four-panel entry doors in the southwest wall have painted graining and plain side trim, and are topped by heavy entablatures with deep friezes and pronounced cornices. The gallery opening in the wall above has, as already noted, paneled sliding shutters and plain trim. The northwest and southeast side walls each have three large twelve over twelve sash windows, also with plain side trim and the same entablatures with deep frieze and heavy cornice as the entry doors. Each side wall also has three electric lights in wall sconces. The northeast wall has no openings, but it cannot be said to be blank. All of the walls share an interesting painting scheme, which dates from 1893 and was renewed in 1981-2. Between the wainscoating and the high moulding, the walls are painted a plain dark gray. Above the moulding, geometric stencil design is painted on a lighter background. A plain painted "frieze" is found below the ceiling. The rear northeast wall received most of the painter's attention. In the center of the northeast wall, directly behind the pulpit, is a trompe l'oeil semicircular apse, with pilasters, paneled walls and ceiling, framed by painted engaged columns, supporting the apse's semielliptical arch, with keystone. To each side of the "apse" is a painted motto with a symbol in an elaborate painted frame - "Sing Praise Unto The Lord", with a harp on the west, and "For His Mercy Endureth Forever", with a cross and crown on the east. The elaborate painting scheme continues on the plaster ceiling. Three differently colored bands frame a large central rectangle, which has small quarter circles, filled with floral and geometric ornament in each corner, and is bordered by a simple line interrupted on each side by ornate patterns. In the center of the ceiling, an elaborate floral and geometric design surrounds the suspended chain of the modern "antique" electric chandelier. (This modern chandelier replaces a sixteen lamp kerosene chandelier which was stolen in 1975.)

Returning to the floor, we find two aisles dividing four rows of slip pews, two in the center and one along each wall. The wooden pews have painted graining, paneled ends with simple scrolled arm rests, and slightly sloping backs, which, like the central divider, are topped by a simple moulding. Another row of five slip pews is found along the northeast wall, in the eastern corner of the auditorium, facing north-west towards the pulpit in the center of the wall. The western two-thirds of the northeast end of the auditorium is occupied by a low stage for the pulpit and the choir. The stage has a paneled front and three sets of steps, which are now carpeted, as is the stage floor. Low railings, with moulded rails, turned balusters, and turned end posts capped by knobs are found on the edge of the stage in front of the choir section to the west, and along the east side of the pulpit section in the center. (The movable pulpit and choir furnishings are mostly Victorian.)

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Continuation sheet #2 DESCRIPTION

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The small lot is grassed around and in front of the building, with a few foundation shrubs on the southwest gable end. A few trees are found on the southeast boundary and along the road, while more trees and bushes have been allowed to grow up behind the church and on the northwest side of the lot. A stone wall marks part of the northeast and southeast boundaries.

Save for the addition of the concrete entry steps and the sign, and the removal of two deteriorated chimneys, the exterior of the church has probably not changed since its construction. The auditorium did receive its elaborate Victorian painted decoration in 1893. Since then, only a few minor interior changes have been made, such as the installation of carpeting and electric lights. Basically, the church's architecture, both interior and exterior, still appears as it did in 1857.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1856-7 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Nutter, Builder

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham is a significant, well-preserved, pre-Civil War country church that is a fine example of the influence of the Greek Revival style on the rural New England vernacular tradition.

History. The Free Will Baptists of the eastern section of Ossipee first used a small chapel, built before 1812, at Leighton's Corners. By 1856, the Early Settlers' Meetinghouse, as it is called today, was in disrepair. There also appears to have arisen some theological differences among the members of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, which used the chapel. This dissension may have spurred the movement to build a new meetinghouse.

In April of 1856, eight men met at the home of Nathaniel Gowdy, and organized the First Free Will Baptist Society of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham. The purpose of the Society was to build a new meetinghouse on a small lot on Granite Road, about a half mile east of Leighton's Corners. The site, purchased from Nathaniel and Lydia Gowdy for the modest sum of fifteen dollars, was very near both the Wakefield and Effingham town lines, hence the Society's long name, indicating that the meetinghouse would serve more than just a section of Ossipee. Little is recorded about the construction of the meetinghouse, which was begun in 1856 and finished in early 1857. It is known, however, that the construction was supervised by head carpenter Joseph Nutter, one of the eight men who first met to organize the Society.

On April 16, 1847, members of the First Ossipee and the Second Wakefield Free Will Baptist churches met at "the new Meeting House".<sup>1</sup> Both churches were dissolved by vote of their members, who then met together and organized the First Ossipee and Wakefield Church. (The Church later added Effingham to the title.) For the rest of the nineteenth century, this Church seems to have flourished. Few changes, however, were made in the building. Modernization in the late nineteenth century was limited to new pulpit furniture, and, in 1893, the repainting of the auditorium, complete with ornate Victorian decorations.

But, as the population of this largely agricultural rural area declined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so did the Church as a viable religious organization. The last full-time minister resigned in the early 1920's. And the Church soon faded into oblivion.

<sup>1</sup>"Church Records of the First Ossipee and Wakefield Church", (manuscript, American Baptist Churches of New Hampshire, 89 North State Street, Concord, N.H.), p. 57.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Church Records of the First Ossipee and Wakefield Church", manuscript, American Baptist Churches of New Hampshire, 89 No. State Street, Concord, N.H.  
 Mrs. Howard B. Higgins, A HISTORY OF THE FIRST FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH OF OSS�PEE, WAKEFIELD AND EFFINGHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Ossipee, 1981).  
 Ed. Georgia Drew Merrill, HISTORY OF CARROLL COUNTY (Somersworth, NH, 1880, reprinted 1971).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1/3 acre

Quadrangle name Wolfeboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

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3	3	8	0	9	0
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4	8	3	7	0	5	5
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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at the iron pin on the northeast side of Granite Road, the boundary of the nominated property proceeds N 53° E for 137 ft., then S 35° E for 128 ft., then S 53° W for 100 ft. to Granite Rd., then northeasterly along Granite Road for 129 ft. to the point of beginning. The nominated property includes the First Free Will Baptist Church in Granite and the lot it has occupied since its construction. The boundaries of the nominated property are shown by the dashed lines on the enclosed sketch map.

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

state N/A code county

state N/A code county

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Ruel

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission

date September 26, 1983

street & number Main Street

telephone (603) 279-8171

city or town Meredith

state New Hampshire

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
N.H. State Historic Preservation Officer

date JAN 26 1984

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

Entered in the  
 National Register

date

3/15/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The church building, however, remained. The Society, a separate entity which had always retained ownership of the property, was often dormant, not meeting for years, but the building was kept in basic repair. In the mid-1950's, the Society was revived and the building received some needed attention. (One change made in this period was the replacement of the deteriorated steps with concrete steps.) Since the mid-1970's, the Society has been quite active, holding regular Sunday services in the summer months. The building has been the subject of an ongoing restoration campaign. Its nineteenth century features have been carefully respected. In 1981-2, for example, the Victorian painting scheme in the auditorium was renewed by William Taylor of Effingham. The only significant recent change has been the installation of electric lighting, including a chandelier to replace the kerosene chandelier that was stolen in 1975. With a few minor exceptions, such as the concrete steps and the electric lights, the church building appears today as it did in the nineteenth century. It is virtually unaltered and is, generally, in excellent condition.

Architecture. The form and the plan of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham are very typical of the smaller country churches built in Carroll County in the nineteenth century. The rectangular plan, the simple gable roof, the gable end main facade with two entries, the internal layout of a foyer leading into a large auditorium, are all common elements. Another Free Will Baptist Church in Ossipee, the Chickville Church of 1838, is a good example of the type. What distinguishes the First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham from the other smaller churches of the time and the area, such as the Chickville Church, is the strong influence of the Greek Revival style on its design. The church did not deviate from the norm in form or plan, but the designer did turn to the current fashion for Greek inspired architecture for the ornamental features--the wide paneled corner pilasters, the wide box cornice with deep frieze and architrave, and, of course, the pronounced pediments over the windows and the doors. Some other churches in the county did share these same features. The United Methodist Church of 1853 at Tuftonboro Corners is probably the closest in design. The Tuftonboro church has very similar cornice, corner pilasters and pediments over the windows and doors. Both churches are three bays wide and three bays deep, with one story long sides, featuring tall twelve over twelve sash windows, and a two-story gable end front having four-panel doors with full sidelights in the side bays of the first story and three six over six sash windows in the second story. The Tuftonboro church is larger and more elaborate. It lacks the round gable window found in the Ossipee church. But, the two stage steeple with spire astride its roof, and the four pilasters found in each entry (the outer pilasters being paneled, the inner pilasters having Ionic capitols) more than compensate. The Ossipee church could be regarded as a scaled down and simplified version of the Tuftonboro church. But, this comparison should not be considered derogatory, as the small churches and chapels serving rural neighborhoods are not usually comparable with the larger and more expensive village churches. Among its peers, the small rural churches of Carroll County, the First Free Will Baptist Church

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of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham must rank as one of the most sophisticated. Most such rural churches continued to be built in the simple vernacular tradition of the Chickville Church of 1838 or the East Sandwich Chapel of 1879. The Greek Revival elements of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham raise it above the norm, and give it a distinction shared by few rural churches in Carroll County.



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Continuation sheet #5 SKETCH MAP

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FIRST FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF OSSIPEE, WAKEFIELD AND EFFINGHAM, NH

