

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**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 Christian Union Society Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON South Walden United Methodist Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Bayley-Hazen Military Road

CITY, TOWN

South Walden

— VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Caledonia

CODE

005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

— BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Christian Union Society c/o Maurice L. Eddy

STREET & NUMBER Bayley-Hazen Military Road

CITY, TOWN

South Walden

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Vermont

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Walden

STATE

Vermont

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE 1980

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DÉTERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR            | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |   |

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The South Walden United Methodist Church is located on the Bayley-Hazen Military Road, approximately 1,640 feet northerly of the junction of the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, in the village of South Walden, Vermont. It stands on a sloping site on the westerly side of the historic, Revolutionary War road, across from the foot of the discontinued Thurston Hill Road.

At the present time the church is a two-story, 3 x 4-bay, timber-framed, gable-roofed building with a sheet metal covered roof, clapboard siding, and a part fieldstone and part concrete foundation. It is a rectangle in plan with over-all dimensions of 40'4" x 50'4". Because of the sloping surface area around the structure, the height of the building varies from one story at the east gabled facade and two stories at the west gabled end wall. Surmounting the east end of the building is a three-stage steeple which culminates in an eighteen-foot-high weather vane staff.

The exterior of the building exhibits a wall entablature with box cornices and cornice returns; double-hung sash windows with four-over-four lights; window head casings with moulded drip caps; six twenty-light sash windows in the basement; and two side wall doors in the basement dining hall. Over the main double-door entrance is a pedimented, gable-roofed hood supported by curvilinear Queen Anne style brackets. The church steeple rises free of the roof in three superimposed stages of successively diminishing sizes. The bell chamber, located at the top of the first stage, is distinguished by large, square windows in each facade. Above the hipped roof of the bell chamber are two telescoped octagonal stages with box cornices and clapboard siding. The steeple has a hipped campaniform roof with copper roofing. It terminates in an eighteen-foot-high weather vane staff, which includes a fifteen foot copper-clad pole with wrought iron scrollwork compass points, an iron shaft with a great copper-sheathed wood vane in the form of a fish, and a copper ball finial.

A 2 x 1-bay vestibule and a square, 2 x 3-bay auditorium define the interior space of the main floor. The vestibule has a stairway to the former choir gallery, and a stairway to the basement. Double-doors, on line with the main entrance, open to the auditorium, which is capable of seating 128 people. It has a central aisle flanked by oak pews. At the west end is a raised chancel, with a central liturgical area flanked by choir stalls separated from the main body of the church by low, matched-board screens. The interior exhibits cork flooring, maple matched-board wainscoting, pediment-shaped window and door head casings, and a maple matched-board ceiling. A kerosene-lamp chandelier with twenty-four lamps hangs from the center of the ceiling. The basement contains a furnace room, rest rooms, kitchen, and a dining hall. It is finished with a concrete floor, matched-board wainscoting, and gypsum board wall and ceiling covering.

The building achieved its present form after extensive renovations in the fall of 1897. During that period of time the furnace room, wood storage area, vestry, and dining room were built in the cellar; the axis of the auditorium was reversed, whereby the pulpit was removed, and the liturgical area was moved from its traditional location at the east end of the auditorium before the choir gallery, to a raised platform at the west end of the auditorium; the choir gallery was sealed off from the auditorium by a partition, and the choir was located behind screened stalls flanking the liturgical area; the direction of the pews was reversed, and the original three-bank pew layout with side aisles was replaced by a two-bank layout with a central aisle; the aisle windows in the west wall were enclosed; the aisle doors between the auditorium and vestibule were enclosed, and a central doorway with double doors with double-acting

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hinges was built; the present furniture and interior finish were installed; the two original entrances were removed from the facade and a central double-door entrance with gabled entrance hood was built; the gallery window was enclosed and a double-sash window with a border of small square panes of stained glass was built in the attic; the then existing steeple (now the bell chamber stage) was redesigned and the two octagonal stages and weather vane staff were built.

In 1975 the basement was rebuilt, and two wood posts were erected from concrete footings in the basement to the interior corners of the steeple. During the following year a new chimney was built up through the northeast corner of the auditorium; an oil furnace was installed in the basement; and a dog-leg staircase was built from the basement to the vestibule.

# 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 checked="" 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 1825

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Originally known as the Christian Union Society Meeting House, the South Walden United Methodist Church is historically significant for its association with the most persuasive movement in Vermont's religious history: The Age of Benevolence, a period in which the Churches across the state worked in unison toward the ideal of universal Christian enlightenment. It is architecturally significant for its late Federal fabric, Queen Anne style interior design and decoration, and its salient steeple, which is a simplified version of the graceful Bulfinch-Benjamin designed steeples of Federalist New England.

The church was built as a union meeting house in 1825 by the Christian Union Society, an organization comprised of the Congregational, Methodist, Universalist, and Freewill Baptist denominations of Walden township. It was built on land owned by Leonard Farrington, an early settler of Walden. In 1828 the land and common on which the meeting house stood was leased to the Society "so long," according to the terms of the agreement, "as s<sup>d</sup> society shall keep a house erected for the worship of Almighty God."<sup>1</sup>

The meeting house was built in the midst of a period of religious intensity in Vermont known as the Age of Benevolence. During this period of spiritual awakenings, from 1816 to 1837, the Churches in Vermont progressed in unison toward the benevolent and humanitarian goals of "relieving human suffering, of dispelling human ignorance, of redeeming the human character from its corruption and its guilt, and bringing the whole family of Adam to a participation in the light and the influence, the hopes and joys of Christianity."<sup>2</sup> In Caledonia County the period was marked by the organization of scores of Churches and other religious societies, the establishment of a few religious newspapers, and the erection of twenty churches.

Most of the churches built in the county during this period, including the South Walden church, were based on the influential design of the Methodist church at Danville Green, Vermont. In form, the church was a one-story, gable-roofed, 2 x 4-bay, steeple-less meeting house with an east end vestibule, choir gallery, and pulpit orientation, and limited interior and exterior ornamentation. It was built in 1822, remodeled in 1842-3, and destroyed by fire in 1884.<sup>3</sup> The influence of the church may have been transmitted by the circuit-riding ministers of the Danville Circuit, which embraced within its bounds most of the towns in Caledonia, Orleans, and Essex counties, and a few towns in Washington County.

As the populations of the Congregational, Universalist, and Freewill Baptist denominations diminished within the Society, the Methodists assumed control of the church. This was accomplished sometime before 1858, when the H.F. Walling Map Establishment printed a map of Caledonia County in which the building was identified as a Methodist Church.<sup>4</sup>

In 1897 the church was extensively remodeled, at which time the present Queen Anne style

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Child, Hamilton. Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties, Vt., 1764 - 1887. Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1887.
- Eddy, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice L. Information from interview. South Walden, Vt., January 15, 1980.
- Hemenway, Abby Maria. The Vermont Historical Gazetteer. Vol. 1. Burlington, Vt.: A.M. Hemenway, 1867.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |         |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 18   | 715400  | 4928400  | B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |         |          | D |      |         |          |

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated is "about one-half acre of Lot Number Three in Grant Lot Number Sixty-nine drawn to the Right of Elijah Galusha, Jr., hereby meaning the land and common on which the meeting house in Walden now stands," as recorded in the Lease of Leonard Farrington to the Christian Union Society, February 2, 1828, Land Records of Walden, Vt., Vol. IV, page 343. It is currently bounded on the north and east by land owned by Maurice Eddy; on the west by the Bayley-Hazen Military Road; and, on the south by land owned by Gillis Fontaine.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Allen D. Hodgdon

ORGANIZATION Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

DATE 2-28-80

STREET & NUMBER Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE 802/828-3226

CITY OR TOWN Montpelier

STATE Vermont

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X 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

*William B. Pomeroy*

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 4-11-80

## FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 5/23/80

ATTEST *Patricia Andrews*

DATE 5/19/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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interior and Neo-Adamesque steeple were built. The St. Johnsbury Caledonian, a weekly newspaper printed at the county seat, documented the progress of the church renovations from August 27 until December 3, when it reported that Revival meetings were being conducted in the building. In the September 3 issue of the paper it was reported that: "A committee from the citizens of South Walden are making extensive repairs on the Union Church."<sup>5</sup> A rare photograph of the building taken at the time documents the extent of the renovations, and provides evidence of the buildings original appearance.

Under the auspices of the Walden Bicentennial Committee the church underwent major renovations in 1975-6, at which time the basement was rebuilt, structural modifications were made to the steeple framing, and a new heating system was installed. The Bicentennial project had a significant impact on the interior of the basement, but it had little effect on the appearance of the auditorium or exterior of the building.

Although the changes in the original meeting house have been many, and some of them have been momentous, the building has retained a cognizance of its original appearance and surroundings, and, as it has developed, it has achieved a sense of monumentality in its eclectic form.

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<sup>1</sup>"Lease: Leonard Farrington to Christian Union Society," Land Records of Walden, Vermont, 1828, IV, 343.

<sup>2</sup>David M. Ludlum, Social Ferment in Vermont 1791 - 1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939). p. 52.

<sup>3</sup>Abby Maria Hemenway, The Vermont Historical Gazetteer (Burlington, Vermont: A.M. Hemenway, 1867), I, p. 316.

<sup>4</sup>H.F. Walling, Map of Caledonia County Vermont (New York: Baker and Tilden, 1858), Walden.

<sup>5</sup>"South Walden," St. Johnsbury Caledonian, LXI (September 3, 1897), p. 5.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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- Laird, Rebecca. "Diary of Rebecca Laird," (unpublished diary in the possession of Maurice L. Eddy, South Walden, Vt.), entries for November 24 - 29, 1897.
- Ludlum, David M. Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791 - 1850. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.
- "South Walden," St. Johnsbury Caledonian, LXI (August 27 - December 3, 1897), p. 5.
- Walling, H.F. Map of Caledonia County Vermont. New York: Baker and Tilden, 1858.