

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



206

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Church-yard Cemetery (preferred)
other names/site number. Jenks Road Cemetery/ Stafford Hill Cemetery

2. Location

street & number Jenks Road (adjacent to 918 Jenks Road) not for publication
city or town Cheshire vicinity
state Massachusetts code MA county Berkshire code 003 zip code 01225

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Brona Simon

February 29, 2012

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, SHPO, Mass. Historical Commission Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

John Edison H. Beall

4.16.12

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
1		site
1		structure
32	1	object
34	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: cemetery

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____
 walls: _____

 roof: _____
 other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Old Church-yard Cemetery (CHS.803, also known as Stafford Hill cemetery and as Jenks Road cemetery) is located in the northeast rural area of Cheshire, MA, on the west side of Stafford Hill. This nomination includes the following resources: the cemetery itself (a contributing site); the ca. 1913 stone wall with iron entrance gate (a contributing structure); a wooden cemetery sign ca. 1960-1980 (a noncontributing object); and 34 representative gravestones dating from 1785-1848. The area is .065 acres. The cemetery is on the west slope of Stafford Hill, which inclines downhill to the west, with open pastures to the south, north, and west, and has a view to the west of Mount Greylock. This rural area is thinly settled. The road frontage of the cemetery is 100 feet, and the cemetery is surrounded by a low stone wall with one iron decorative gate (Photo 1). This cemetery is associated with the settlement of New Providence, a plantation of Baptists who came from Rhode Island. A half-mile southeast of the cemetery is the Stafford Hill Memorial (NR 1986, MHC # CHS.902), a commemorative stone tower constructed in 1927, which contains the body of Col. Joab Stafford, the first purchaser of lots in New Providence in 1766 and military leader of local men who fought at the Battle of Bennington in August of 1777.

Narrative Description

The setting of the cemetery is on a windswept hillside, exposed to the north and west. There is a visible trailer house at 918 Jenks Road, some 30 feet east and uphill, adjacent to the cemetery, and another house across the road. There are four (out of an original seven) large sugar maples remaining between the road and the stone wall (the westernmost maple having been cut down in 2003). There are two oak trees in the western half of the cemetery, and two large white pine trees at the west or downhill end of the cemetery, as well as a few red maples within the stone wall enclosure. None of these appear to have been deliberately planted, and are probably self-seeded. There are no gravestones in the southwest corner of the cemetery within the walls. Stones in the cemetery date from the three earliest in 1785 to the latest in 1848, the latter date signals the waning years of the New Providence settlement in Cheshire.

The gravestones face west and downhill on Stafford Hill's western slope. Currently, 70 headstones remain above ground. Five stones are broken and on the ground, and five are tipped. Almost all of the stones are of white marble, and many are badly "sugared" and difficult to read. Exceptions to the use of this predominant material are the two red sandstone monuments of Isaac and Phoebe Hathaway (1798 and 1785) with matching footstones, and three slate stones, the earliest of which is that of Melindy Flack (1796). None of the stones examined show any indication of names of stone cutters. The cemetery is arranged in very irregular rows, recorded in 1892 by Judge J. M. Barker, in his late 19th-century history of Berkshire County, as numbering eleven, with other stones scattered around the site in no discernable order. It is surrounded by a low stone wall and an iron gate, installed in 1913. The iron gate faces south toward Jenks Road, and includes, to the west of the gate facing the road and outside the stone wall, a wooden sign (Photo 2) on which is painted, "THE SITE OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, ORGANIZED AUGUST 28, 1769, KNOWN AS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST OF NEW PROVIDENCE. PASTORED BY ELDER PETER WERDEN UNTIL HIS DEATH—FEBRUARY 21, 1808. HERE LIES THE BODIES OF THOSE EARLY CHURCH FOUNDERS UNTIL THE RESURRECTION DAY WHEN A NOBLER BODY THEY SHALL FIND." This wooden sign, set on new pressure-treated posts outside the stone wall and facing Jenks Road, is a relatively recent addition, estimated to be 30 to 50 years old.

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From the road, the current appearance of the cemetery largely reflects the addition of the surrounding stone wall and the iron gate in 1913, when work was done on the neglected site. Historical photos from the 1890s indicate that the ground was very lumpy with hillocks, and historical records indicate that these hillocks were smoothed out in 1913 as well. At that time, tipped stones leaning in every direction were set upright. The historical record is silent on whether any stones were actually moved. The same work was done in 1913 at the Wells/The Notch Cemetery (CHS.807) also in Cheshire, and the Judge Barker 1892 history simply notes, "17 stones re-set and graded in 1913" for that cemetery. Today, the majority of the extant stones are upright, and the ground in the cemetery has no hillocks. The original arrangement of the stones in the Old Church-yard Cemetery is probably largely intact, although it is certainly a possibility that some were moved. However, the close arrangement of stones with the same family surnames suggests that most of the stones are in or near their original locations.

Most of the gravestones are plain with square tops, and no design or images, containing just text: either names and dates of the deceased, or the addition of an epitaph. They are predominantly white marble, from several local quarries in Berkshire County. The use of stone other than white marble is rare. The Isaac (died 1798) and Phoebe Hathaway (died 1785) stones are the only red-sandstone markers in the cemetery, and Melindy Flack's stone (died 1796) stands out as a rare slate stone, badly broken. There are two other slate stones in the northeast corner of the cemetery: one deteriorated and unreadable, and one shouldered.

The New Providence settlers appear not to have dwelled on death and mortal remains, as most of the early gravestones here are completely lacking in iconography. A representative example of the undecorated stone is that of Hannah Hoskins (Photo 3), a white marble stone, round-arched with round shoulders, about two feet tall, which reads: In Memory of/ Hannah Hoskins/ Daughter of Joshua Hoskins/ And Lydia his wife/ was born in Taunton/ June 28th 1746/ And died october [sic.] 9th 1792 Aged 46." Other undecorated stones with round-arched tops include those of Isaac (1798) and Phoebe (1785) Hathaway, Ephriam Wilmarth (1785), Dr. William Jenks (1794), and Melindy Flack (1796).

Another longstanding tradition evident in this cemetery is the plain, rectangular, white-marble stone with flat top. These stones stand between 1½ and three feet tall, and again are almost always devoid of decoration. Examples of this type of stone include Joseph Manchester (1821), Julia Cushing (1829), Freelove Jenks Cushing (1843), and the most recent stone in the cemetery, that of Capt. Shubael Wells (1848).

At the end of the 18th century and into the early years of the 19th century, the willow-and-urn motif began to appear in cemeteries. This is found in the Old Church-yard Cemetery in some 15 stones. Examples with a willow-and-urn motif, all dating from 1812 to 1830, include the stones of Clarisa Wilmarth (1812), Dr. David Cushing (1814) (Photo 4), Hopestill Dexter (1815), and Capt. Charles Converse (1830). The Converse stone (Photo 6) has a slightly convex top and is divided in four parts from top to bottom: an oval within which is a willow on the left whose top weeps over a single urn, below which is the information that this monument is to Captain Charles Converse who died Jan. 31, 1830, below which is an indented horizontal line marking the next division, which contains an inscription in verse. Below this is a double or beaded horizontal line dividing the lowest portion below from the three parts above. The inscription reads: "Here in Death's cold embrace this body lies/ His soul has gone to God the just the wise/ His dust must sleep and voice be heard no more/ Till the last trump shall sound from shore to shore."

Several stones in the cemetery dating from the opening decades of the 19th century have classical architectural motifs. The two outstanding examples are the markers for Stephen Carpenter and Julia Cushing. The 1815 stone of Stephen Carpenter (Photo 5) is white marble and approximately three feet tall. It has a round-arched top with a prominent keystone in high relief. The arch is decorated with ribbing following the curve of the arch, and the interior of the arch is taken up with a ribbed circular design. This round arch is set off from the body of the stone by a horizontal course of beadwork, and by the rectangular projecting tops of two ribbed columns or pilasters, which extend to the ground and

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contain within the panel Carpenter's name, dates, and an inscription. Filling the four corners of this panel are ribbed fan shapes. The inscription in the main panel reads: "This monument is erected in memory of Stephen Carpenter, who died Feb. 5th, 1815 in the 75th year of his age. He was ordained Deacon of the First Baptist Church in Cheshire, Mass. July 1, 1783, and continued to fill the office with honor to himself and to the Christian religion." The second outstanding stone with a classical motif is that of Julia Cushing. It is an 1829 stone that stands a little under three feet tall, also white marble, with a flat top. Its classical style is bracketed with undulating vines, a centered cartouche, and a draped top. The inscription is simple: "In memory of Julia Cushing, born July 26, 1808 and died June 30, 1829."

Other inscriptions invoke religious themes of mortality, immortality, and the transience of life, messages from the dead to the living and vice-versa, and also biographical information. For example, the stone of Elijah Goff, who died at age 27 on July 20, 1812, reads: "I yet do speak tho I am dead/ A Sovereign God made this my bed/ And what I have to say to thee/ Be ready for Eternity." Nancy Briggs, the wife of Capt. Allen Briggs and daughter of Massachusetts Governor Briggs, died in Adams, MA, on December 21, 1818, at the age of 56. Her stone reads; "O Death thou hast conquered me/ For I know that my Redeemer lives; And in him I trust to deliver me/ From the dark prison of the grave." On a similar theme the marker of Benjamin Brown, who died at age 43 on September 22, 1809, reads: "Friends and physicians could not save/ This mortal body from the grave/ Nor can the grave confine it here; When Jesus calls it must appear." In a message to the deceased, the undecorated stone of Capt. Shubael Wells, who died November 6, 1848, at age 51, reads: "Dearest father thou hast left us and thy loss we deeply feel/ But tis God that hath bereft us, He can all our sorrows heal."

A few of the inscriptions in the cemetery are both biographical and personally descriptive. The previously mentioned classical-style stone of Stephen Carpenter noted his public work as a Deacon in the First Baptist Church. On a more personal level is the stone of Phoebe Hathaway, which reads: "In memory of Phoebe, wife of Isaac Hathaway, who died August 18, 1785, aged 51 years, and had been the mother of 16 children, 13 of whom were living at her death." The stone of the youthful Lydia Fisk notes the cause of her death: "Sacred to the memory of Lydia Fisk who departed this life Oct. 2, 1804 aged 14 years 2 months and 7 days. Her death was occasioned by a fall from a horse. Thus droops the lily that is matured. She was the daughter of Ephriam and Lydia Fisk." The young Rebecca Luther, wife of Royal P. Luther, died four months shy of her 18th birthday. Her inscription, rather personal and direct, reads: "Rebecca has gone from earth away/ She paid the debt we all must pay/ Fled from this world of sin and pain/ We hope through grace with Christ to reign."

The most elaborate inscription in the cemetery, replete with biographical information and befitting his importance to New Providence, is the stone of Elder Peter Werden (1728-1808), the first minister of New Providence. His stone reads: "Here lies the body of Peter Werden late pastor of the Church of Christ in Cheshire. He was born June 6, 1728, Connected by the mighty power of God to the Lord Jesus Christ May 9, 1748. In the month of May 1751, he was ordained to the work of the ministry in Warwick [Rhode Island] and continued measurably faithful in his pastoral charge to the close of his life, which was Feb. 21, 1808." The inscription on this stone then reads: "His soul to God he used to send/ To cry for grace for foe and friend/ But blessed be the God of love/ His hour is now with Christ above/ This crumbling sculpture keeps the clay/ That used to hold his noble mind/ But at the Resurrection Day/ A nobler body he shall find."

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known at the Old Church-yard Cemetery, sites may be present. One ancient Native American site is known in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the cemetery represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of ancient sites. The cemetery is located on a well-drained, level to moderately sloping terrace in close proximity to wetlands. Soils are sandy and formed in glacial outwash. A tributary stream of Dry Brook flows north less than 1,000 feet west of the cemetery. The tributary stream and Dry Brook converge approximately one mile north of the cemetery. Dry Brook then flows approximately one mile north to the Hoosic River. The entire town of Cheshire lies within the Hoosic and Hudson

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River drainage. Small, short-term, special purpose-type sites may characterize typical Native American sites in the area. Given the above information, the small size of the cemetery (0.65 acres), the excavation of approximately 60-70 graves, construction of the adjacent meetinghouse, and grading of the ground surface in 1913-1914, a low potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources in the cemetery.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources in the cemetery. Unmarked graves containing a burial shaft, skeletal remains, evidence of a coffin, and coffin hardware may represent the most common potential archaeological resources in the cemetery. Approximately 60 to 70 gravestones have been identified at the Old Church-yard Cemetery. In 1892, Elder John Leland described and recorded 62 or 63 gravestones, while in 1914, the Reverend Pease mentions 70 stones, the earliest being 1785. The difference between the Leland and Pease totals may result from the grading and cleanup in 1913-1914, during which some stones lying on the ground were uncovered while others were uprighted and reset. Clothing and other personal items of the deceased may also be present in graves. Gravestone markers and memorial offerings may also exist in buried contexts in the vicinity of the graves. Structural evidence of outbuildings related to the operation and maintenance of the cemetery may exist. Structural evidence from the first meetinghouse, related outbuildings and occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also be located within the cemetery bounds.

(end)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART
EXPLORATION and SETTLEMENT
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1785-1913

Significant Dates

1785-1848 - dates of gravestones
1913 – wall and gate added, stones reset

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is 1785 to 1913. The extant gravestones indicate that the cemetery was in active use from 1785 to 1848. This time-frame corresponds to the active settlement of Baptists from Rhode Island, who established the community of New Providence on Stafford Hill. By the 1840s, most of the settlement had moved to adjacent towns such as Cheshire and Adams, or had moved on elsewhere. The closing of the second church on the hill in 1843 marked

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the end of this era, and the last burial in the cemetery followed five years later. In 1913, the cemetery was rehabilitated by the Berkshire Baptist Association: stones were reset, and an enclosure wall constructed. Thus 1913 marks the end of the period of significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Because this is a cemetery, and contains graves, and it derives its significance from its central role in the lives of New Providence settlers and from its connections with Baptist families who settled in Cheshire, Adams, and Windsor, it meets Criteria Consideration D.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Old Church-yard Cemetery in Cheshire (CHS.803) is significant under Criterion A, in two areas: Exploration and Settlement, and Social History, for its associations with the Baptist community of New Providence, who came to the area from Rhode Island at the end of the 1760s and became the first European settlers in the area. Information about the daily lives and attitudes of the early settlers of New Providence and Cheshire, evident from the gravestones and epitaphs, also gives the cemetery significance in the area of Social History. The cemetery is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Art. The cemetery iconography reflects the Baptists' late 18th/early 19th century attitudes toward life and death in the preference for plain, square-topped gravestones, followed later in the 19th century by use of the willow-and-urn and classical architectural motifs. The cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D as a cemetery deriving its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, and from association with historic events. The cemetery retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and is significant at the local level.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Exploration and Settlement:

The Old Church-yard Cemetery is the principal surviving remnant containing historical associations with the initial settlement of Baptists into Berkshire County, in what was then known as New Providence, now Cheshire. The settlement of New Providence was an organized move from Rhode Island to Berkshire County in 1768 and 1769, after the formation of the Baptist Church. Among the Baptist settlers who moved to Cheshire were many descendants of the followers of Roger Williams from his settlement in and around Coventry, RI. As the largest of the five cemeteries in the area associated with this early settlement, the Old Church-yard Cemetery contains the graves of more than half of these settlers. Because New Providence families settled prior to the incorporation of Cheshire in 1793 from parts of what are now Adams, Lanesborough, Windsor, and New Ashford, the cemetery marks the earliest permanent European settlement in this area of Berkshire County. It is the only surviving landscape feature on the summit of Stafford Hill, which was the heart of the New Providence settlement, and is located adjacent to the site of what was the most important building in New Providence, the first Baptist Meeting House, built in 1770 and in use until 1818.

Social History:

The gravestones and epitaphs in the Old Church-yard Cemetery give evidence of the inhabitants of the New Providence community, their daily lives, the risks associated with life in the 18th and 19th centuries, the occupations of its members, the feats of which they were most proud, their attitudes toward life and death, and their religious beliefs. The cemetery contains seven Revolutionary War militiaman, and two graves of military men whose service postdated the Revolution. Those who served in the militia were willing at a moment's notice to take up arms; some 41 men in New Providence marched to the Battle of Bennington in August 1777. The cemetery also contains the graves of two doctors who were

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prominent citizens: Dr. David Cushing and Dr. William Jencks. The cemetery contains the surnames of 21 families who were members of Cheshire's original Baptist Church. The prominent role of the church in social life is reflected in the graves of some of the settlers and members: Betsy Read, a member when the Baptist Church was organized in 1768; church deacons, including Stephen Carpenter, ordained in 1783, and Allan Brown, the church clerk from 1770-1820; and beloved minister Peter Werden, the first pastor who served until 1808. Two stones have inscriptions reflecting the Baptist emphasis on salvation by the grace of God: the epitaphs of Rebecca Luther, the last line of which is "We hope through grace with Christ to reign"; and of Elder Peter Werden, whose epitaph begins "His soul to God he used to send/ To cry for grace for foe and friend." Several of the stones reflect the role of women. For example, the stone at the grave of Phoebe Hathaway (1734-1785) records that she bore 16 children, 13 still living at the time of her death. The grave of Rebecca Luther, the wife of Royal P. Luther, who died before her 18th birthday, and the grave of Clarisa Wilmarth, the wife of Henry Wilmarth, who died at age 25, reflect the perils of life and the tender age of death for many young brides. The cemetery contains no bodies of people who died from smallpox, as was the habit of the time, because of fear of catching the dreaded disease. When Jerusha Bucklin, of a well-known early family, died of smallpox in 1776, she was not permitted burial in the cemetery, and instead was buried a quarter-mile southwest of the cemetery, off Jenks Road, in a single grave (CHS.809).

Art:

The plain-speaking habits of the early Baptists and their attitudes toward death are reflected in the artwork and motifs in the Old Church-yard Cemetery. A common trend among the earliest markers in this cemetery is the simple, white marble stone with squared top, unadorned by any iconography beyond the name and dates of the deceased, and sometimes an epitaph. There are some stones that are plain except for the focus in the tympanum, which can be scalloped and fairly tall. Because the Baptists' theology did not emphasize sin or the triumph of death, their iconography and language on the stones is plain and straightforward, and there are also no soul effigies or death's heads. The first national fashion in gravestone iconography exhibited or extant in the cemetery is the "willow-and-urn" motif, which gained popularity nationally beginning in the 1790s, lasting into the 1830s; this motif appears on many stones in the Old Church-yard Cemetery, the earliest dating to 1812. A second national movement, popular from the 1810s until ca. 1829, consists of classical motifs, including tympanums with keystones, fluted pilasters, arches, and the suggestion that the stones depict the gateway to heaven. Because the last burial was in 1848, the cemetery predates the Victorian period and the stylistic exuberances of the late 19th century.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Brief History of New Providence

According to Rev. Charles S. Pease, the Old Church-yard Cemetery is one of five cemeteries in Cheshire associated with the initial settlement in 1768 and 1769 of Baptists into Berkshire County, an organized move from Rhode Island. Among the Baptist settlers of Cheshire were many descendants of Roger Williams and his followers, who settled in and around Providence and Coventry, Rhode Island. In 1766, some of these men purchased a large tract of land near the head of the Hoosac River in what is now largely Cheshire and Adams, Massachusetts, and named it "New Providence Plantation." The New Providence settlement on Stafford Hill predates by almost 25 years the incorporation of the Town of Cheshire, in 1793, which was taken from parts of Adams, Lanesborough, Windsor, and New Ashford. New Providence was settled in what is now the north part of Cheshire by families of the Baptist faith (sometimes called Anabaptists, although they themselves disapproved of the term) who left Rhode Island to establish the "Church of Christ in New Providence." The early Baptist families and their descendants settled not only in Cheshire, but also on land that eventually formed the towns of Adams, Lanesborough, and Windsor.

The settlement originally known as New Providence, and known since the late 19th century as Stafford Hill, was centered on the original meetinghouse, built around 1770 next to the future site of the Old Church-yard Cemetery. Its

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precise original location in relation to the cemetery is unknown. This original meetinghouse was stripped of useful appurtenances, moved around 1820, and remodeled as a Glebe or Ministerial House for the church farm. According to church records, the "sound and seasoned timbers" were dragged by oxen to the north slope of Stafford Hill Road about three-quarters of a mile northeast of the cemetery. It stands today at 18 Stafford Hill Road as a much-altered private house, with a five-bay façade, two stories, and a hipped-roof, one-story front porch, and is known as the Valentine Bowen House (CHS.18). Because the congregation used this as a ministerial house after its move, Valentine Bowen was not actually the first occupant. The second meetinghouse was built, according to William Browne, a local historian writing in a 1938 article, "almost opposite the homestead of [Joab] Stafford not far from where the Stafford Memorial stands today and within about a half mile from the Old Church-yard Cemetery." The new church building was dedicated January 1, 1818, used until 1843, and then stood decaying and empty until around 1855, when it was torn down. The date of 1843, when the second meetinghouse was abandoned, essentially ended the old New Providence settlement at Stafford Hill. The last burial in the Old Church-yard Cemetery in 1848 is roughly contemporaneous with the demise of the settlement.

In its heyday between 1790 and 1843, the New Providence settlement on Stafford Hill contained some 40 houses and an estimated population of around 1,500. Very little evidence of the settlement remains today. In addition to the five cemeteries associated with the settlement, there are several surviving houses, but none on the summit of Stafford Hill. Three of these houses are on Jenks Road: the 1768 Captain Samuel Low House (CHS.21), the 1768 Daniel Coman/Joseph Bennett House (CHS.23), and the 1770 Nicholas Brown House (CHS.20). Other extant houses from the settlement include the 1805 Captain Daniel Smith House on Fales Road (CHS.36); and two on Stafford Hill Road: the 1775 Richardson/Brayton House (CHS.19) and the 1776 Valentine Bowen House (CHS.18). The rest of the settlement has vanished. Mid 19th-century local histories note that even wells were filled in and buildings moved (some north across the town line to Adams) or disassembled for the wood. Based on the recollections of 94-year-old Julia Sherman Hunt, *The Berkshire Hills* published an article on Stafford Hill in December 1900. The magazine writes of the ca. 1860 removal of the last vestiges of the New Providence buildings:

The disappearance of all the signs of settlement of Stafford's Hill, with the exception of the old burying ground, has not been due entirely to the action of time, although desertion and neglect have had much to do with it. About forty years ago a son of Daniel Smith, the brother of David Smith, bought up all the remains of the buildings on the summit, and sold the undecayed timber and foundation stones, which were removed away.

There is currently one property listed in the National Register of Historic Places commemorating part of the history of New Providence. Placed on the Register in February 1986, the Stafford Memorial Tower (CHS.902) on Stafford Hill Road is located on the southwest corner of what was originally Col. Joab Stafford's land, House Lot #5. The monument, erected in 1927 by the Sons of the American Revolution, is 25 feet tall and made of random rubble fieldstone. This commemorative tower includes an arched marble sarcophagus, with the original tombstone with draped urn motif containing the remains of Col. Joab Stafford. The tower was the location of five bronze plaques, placed between the tower arches after 1929, commemorating events in Col. Stafford's life. (Two plaques were stolen by vandals by 1985, and the other three have been removed.) Stafford was originally buried in the Wells/The Notch cemetery (CHS.807), one of five cemeteries associated with the early New Providence Baptist settlement in what is now the Town of Cheshire. The Wells/The Notch cemetery is located on the south side of Windsor Road, north of MacDonald Brook, behind and south of the Gus Martin farm at 594 Windsor Road. It is at the bottom of Stafford Hill about three-quarters of a mile southeast of the Stafford Memorial. Today, it contains only 14 remaining stones, dating between 1773 and 1842. From this early cemetery, Stafford's remains were removed and reinterred at the Memorial in 1927. Col. Stafford has been described by

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Rev. Charles Pease as "easily the foremost citizen in the New Providence settlement." Stafford surveyed the settlement in 1766 upon his arrival, laid out and purchased a 500-acre parcel for himself, was an active participant in early settlement life, ran a store, tavern, and post office in his house on Stafford Hill, and is famous for leading New Providence men to the Battle of Bennington in August 1777.

History of the Old Church-yard Cemetery

The Old Church-yard Cemetery is the most important remaining site associated with the settlement of New Providence and it is the only site, associated with this early settlement, located on the summit of Stafford Hill in the immediate vicinity of the first meetinghouse. The five cemeteries associated with the New Providence settlement were considered by Rev. Pease in 1914 as "silent encampments, which may be regarded as exclusively the resting place of the early settlers on New Providence." Pease recorded that "of the five cemeteries mentioned, the old church-yard cemetery is much the largest and the first burial plot in the New Providence settlement. The land description contained one acre and 20 rods of land, and was described as situated round what was known as Elder Peter Werden's meetinghouse." He estimated that of approximately 500 members of the Baptist Church in New Providence, there were in 1914 some 124 graves of these early settlers in the five cemeteries circling the hill: the Old Church-yard Cemetery/Jenks Road Cemetery (CHS.803); Jenks/Wells Road Cemetery (CHS.804); Burt Cemetery (CHS.805); Fales Road/Saw Mill Cemetery (CHS.806); and Wells/The Notch Cemetery (CHS.807). Of these five, Pease noted that the Old Church-yard Cemetery was located immediately adjacent to the first Baptist meetinghouse, and the earliest and largest, containing the remains of the majority of early settlers. Today, of the five cemeteries, two, Jenks/Wells Road Cemetery and the Burt Cemetery, are in ruins, many graves having been removed elsewhere, possibly to the North Street Cemetery in Cheshire, the new 1859 Cheshire Cemetery, or to cemeteries in adjacent Adams. Although all five cemeteries in Cheshire associated with the New Providence settlement were altered and "improved" in the early 20th century, the ones with the greatest integrity are the Old Church-yard Cemetery, the Fales Road/Saw Mill Cemetery, and the Wells/The Notch Cemetery. The Old Church-yard Cemetery served both Cheshire and Adams for burials in the early years of settlement, according to Mrs. Hunt, a former resident of the area who visited the cemetery in 1900.

There are several historical descriptions of this cemetery and several old photographs, one taken around 1892 or 1893, and several taken around 1913-14. Barker's work, published in 1892 as "Early Settlements of Cheshire," listed the cemetery stones recorded by Elder John Leland in 1892. Leland described and recorded more than 60 legible stones at that time. He arranged his recording of the cemetery into 11 irregular rows, lettered A through K. He noted that three stones were "broken and down" on the ground, those of Joseph Manchester (died 1824), Hopestill Brown (died 1815), and Nancy Briggs (died 1815). He recorded that three other markers were surrounded by fences: those of Rebecca Converse (died 1835) and her husband Capt. Charles Converse (died 1830), and the stone of Rebecca Luther (died 1822), 17-year-old wife of Royal L. Luther. The fences, described as wooden and designating family plots, were not mentioned by 1913. A photograph entitled "a deserted burying ground" was published in 1893 in the periodical *Picturesque Berkshire*. It shows the Old Church-yard Cemetery as open land with part of a wooden split-rail fence, deep hummocks, and uneven ground amidst a view of eight or 10 stones tipped and leaning at all angles, but none upright. About seven years later, in a 1900 article in *The Berkshire Hills*, Mrs. Hunt, a woman in her 90s on a visit to the hills of her youth, commented on the "sad state of neglect" of the burying ground on Stafford Hill, an apt description of the condition of the cemetery in the 1893 photograph.

The neglected condition of the cemetery was much the same ten years later. According to a typescript dating from around 1910, possibly compiled by Julia Bowen, this cemetery was described as located in "open pasture" with a herd of

(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Berkshire, MA

Name of Property

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eighteen cows and "no vestige of a fence." It was located at a former fork in the road adjacent to where the old Baptist Church of New Providence stood. Bowen continues: "The stones are leaning in every direction. Many are broken and the inscriptions are lost on some. Nearly all are of white marble, one is of slate, and two are of red sand-stone. Thistles and mullin." Bowen added that there were board fences around a cherry tree and around the Converse and Rebecca C. Luther lots within the cemetery. The cherry tree and fences are long gone.

Attached to the 1914 Pease manuscript in the Ballard Collection at the Berkshire Athenaeum is an undated, turn-of-the-century newspaper article to which have been added small photographs of the cemeteries of the New Providence settlement. Two of these photographs show a portion of the Old Church-yard Cemetery, probably taken around 1914, from Jenks Road. The first shows part of the current stone wall and the iron gate. The second shows a similar view with a wooden cemetery sign. According to the undated newspaper article, the sign reads: "Site of the/ FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH/ in/ NORTHERN BERKSHIRE / Organized August 28, 1769/ and the/ Burial place of Rev. PETER WERDEN/ The First Pastor, 1770-1808." The current cemetery sign is a replacement for this original sign. The undated newspaper notes that the cemetery had been "sadly neglected for many years" and had remained in open pasture. It continues:

Recently a committee appointed by the Berkshire Baptist association, with money raised by public subscription has restored the lot to a proper condition. It has been inclosed with a durable fence, many of the stones have been reset and the ground has been cleaned up and graded. The frontage is a massive stone wall with an iron gate. There is a beautiful row of maple trees along the roadway.

In 1914, Reverend Pease mentioned 70 graves, with the oldest stone dating to 1785, that of Phoebe Hathaway. Elder John Leland's 1892 reading indicated three stones from 1785: Ephraim Wilmarth's stone, also spelled "Willmarth" (died June 16, 1785); Mrs. Isaac (Phoebe) Hathaway (died August 18, 1785); and Mrs. Stephen (Amey) Carpenter (died September 6, 1785). The difference between the 62 or 63 stones Leland transcribed and the 70 noted by Pease is probably explained by the grading and cleanup in 1913-14 after the discovery of some stones on the ground, which were then uprighted and reset. One additional photo (dated November 27, 1913) in the Art Bastian "Records of the First Baptist Church in Cheshire Mass." shows the stone wall being built and is labeled "new wall." The stone wall and iron gate were photographed in late 1913. None of these sources indicate that individual stones were moved, but nearly all mention that leaning stones were set upright.

The Old Church-yard Cemetery is known by many names. It is referred to in the 1940 Veterans Grave Registration source as the "Jenks Road Cemetery," as well as in the 1997 Berkshire Family History Association source on Cheshire cemeteries. Nelson (1975) refers to this as the "Jenks Road Cemetery" and also as the "Stafford Hill Cemetery," which "dates from 1785," and names it the "first Cheshire cemetery." In 1900, a former resident of the area referred to it as the "Stafford's Hill burying ground." (The historical spelling was "Stafford's Hill" for both the cemetery and the hill, another name for the Old Church-yard Cemetery being "Stafford's Hill Cemetery." Beers' 1876 Atlas refers to the area as "Stafford Hill." "Stafford Hill" and "Stafford Hill Road" are used currently for geographical features.) Copies of the Baptist Church records (Cooke Collection) indicate two conveyances regarding the church property on Stafford Hill and the cemetery. The first was made by "Nicholas Cook &c" (who had bought the land from the original proprietors), conveyed to Joab Stafford, and included "the use and purpose of allowing that is to say as a Ministerial lot or a Glebe Land for the better support and maintenance of the first Anabaptist Minister of the Gospel who shall be duly ordained and settled according to the law of the Anabaptist society or congregation in New Providence aforesaid or by whatsoever name the same place may be called and also for the better support and maintenance of each and all his successors." This first conveyance was the ministerial lot on Stafford Hill Road, to which the Bowen House (CHS.18), or the first meetinghouse, was moved ca. 1820.

(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Berkshire, MA

Name of Property

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The second conveyance dealt with a parcel referring to the land at the Old Church-yard Cemetery. This second parcel was conveyed from Joseph Bennett to Joab Stafford, "one acre and 20 rods of land lying and being in said New Providence and is situated round the Meeting House in the said place it further appears to be known by the name of Elder Peter Werden's meeting House." The deed specifies: "Meeting house lot and also for a burying place for the said Society also for any further or other public use that the said Society shall see fit to put the same unto." The deed was signed by Joseph Bennett on November 9, 1779, and recorded June 26, 1786. Inasmuch as New Providence had set aside no land for a meetinghouse and Joab Stafford ran into financial troubles in 1785, it is possible that he was beginning to sell off some of his almost 400 acres as early as 1779, since Bennett was one of the settlers who bought from Stafford. This may explain the deed mentioning the meetinghouse and cemetery land as early as 1779. Burials may have been occurring as early as ca. 1770, after the first settlers arrived, and this second conveyance may have legalized a de facto situation. In any case, the deed was signed on May 22, 1779, by Joseph Bennett Esq. and Jonathan Remington, and recorded June 26, 1786.

The ownership of the Old Church-yard Cemetery was in question for many years. According to Diana Thurston, who lives presently at 901 Jenks Road directly across from the cemetery, her parents, Donald and Eileen Moore, took care of and maintained the cemetery for 30 years, until 1992. They mowed and brushed out the grounds each year. Since the mid 1990s, Diana Thurston and her husband have been doing the maintenance themselves, using their own gasoline-powered lawn mower. The Baptist Church in Cheshire apparently abandoned this property. According to Gus Martin of the Cheshire Assessors and the Cheshire Historical Commission, the cemetery property was not taxable land, and the issue of whether this was a public cemetery or still belonged to the Baptist Church was unresolved as the 20th century closed. Subsequently, at Town Meeting, the Town of Cheshire unanimously voted to acquire the "Jenks Road Cemetery," as it is locally known, by either purchase not to exceed \$1,000, or by eminent domain. Ownership of the "Old Church-yard Cemetery," also known as "Jenks Road Cemetery," has been vested since 2006 in the Town of Cheshire.

Some Significant Burials

In 1914, Pease noted that this cemetery contained stones representing 21 families: Briggs, Brown, Burton, Carpenter, Converse, Cushing, Denison, Fisk, Goff, Hack [sic. Flack], Haskins, Hathaway, Jenks, Luther, Manchester, Mason, Read, Root, Wells, Werden, and Willmarth. He wrote that these surnames could be found in the records of the First Baptist Church. The Old Church-yard Cemetery represents the largest collection of New Providence pioneers who settled in this part of Berkshire County. Some, like Benjamin Brown (1766-1809), were involved in the incorporation of Cheshire—in Brown's case as a petitioner to set Cheshire off from parts of Adams, Lanesborough, Windsor, and New Ashford.

In addition, at least three of the original settlers and proprietors from Rhode Island who took up lands in New Providence are buried here, as well as succeeding generations of their families. Shubael Wilmarth (1743-1809), also of Providence, RI, filed October 31, 1767, on land between East Hoosuck (Adams) and Williamsburg (a section of Cheshire) claiming the westernmost half of Lot 2. Stephen Carpenter arrived from Providence, RI, on February 8, 1769, and filed on 115 acres in New Providence. The third original settler is Joseph Brown, from Cumberland, RI, who filed on land June 4, 1773, in Gageborough (now Windsor).

Historians consider the most prominent citizen connected with New Providence to be Elder Peter Werden (1728-1808), the first minister of New Providence. According to his gravestone, he was "converted by the mighty power of God to the Lord Jesus Christ, May 9th, 1748." In May 1751, he was ordained to the ministry in Warwick, RI, and subsequently served as minister in Coventry, RI. He came from Rhode Island in 1770 to minister to the New Providence Baptist Church after a call from the church members who met in conference on August 28, 1769. Elder Werden was supported by donations and the use of 50 acres, a gift from Nicholas Cook and Joseph Bennett. Principally from this gift of land, Elder Werden supported himself and his large family, and served the church as pastor for nearly 40 years. Elder Werden is credited with having guided many young Baptist ministers during his years with the New Providence church. Because

(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Name of Property

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of his efforts in spreading the Baptist word, the New Providence church became known within the Baptist community regionally. He died February 21, 1808. Elder Werden's son, Col. Peter Werden, is also buried here, as well as other family members.

Other prominent citizens who were active members serving the New Providence Baptist Church include Betsy Read (Betty Reed), one of the original 12 members who organized the New Providence church in 1768; Deacon Stephen Carpenter, longstanding Deacon of the First Baptist Church of Cheshire, who was ordained to that position on July 1, 1783; Allan Brown, church clerk from 1770-1820; Dr. David Cushing; Dr. William Jenks (a/k/a Jenckes); Captain Philip Mason; Capt. Charles Converse; and Captain Shubael Wells. All are buried in the Old Church-yard Cemetery.

Most of the able-bodied men in the New Providence settlement fought in the Revolutionary War. Several histories of the early settlers of New Providence mention that some 41 to 50 men followed Col. Joab Stafford's independent company of volunteers to the Battle of Bennington on August 16, 1777. In August 1777, while British General Burgoyne was traveling from Ticonderoga to Albany, he sent a force of Hessians to Bennington, VT, to capture American supplies stored there. News of the British march to Bennington spread rapidly, and available men from miles around rushed to Bennington to prevent a British victory. Colonel Joab Stafford gathered 41 men from New Providence and surrounding towns, to which were added 46 men from Lanesborough under Capt. Daniel Brown, and 44 volunteers from New Providence to Bennington under Capt. Samuel Low. Brown and Low are two other early Baptist settlers associated with New Providence, but not buried in the Old Church-yard Cemetery. On August 14, 1777, the "Silver Greys," as they were known, gained victory over the British at Bennington. Col. Stafford was wounded, but continued to fight. According to Reynolds, "This victory gave Stafford much local recognition," among which was the name "Stafford's Hill" where the Old Church-yard Cemetery is located. Revolutionary War graves at the Cemetery include those of Col. Peter Werden (1728-1808), son of Elder Peter Werden; Stephen Carpenter (1741-1815); William Jenckes (1756-1794); Joseph Brown (1727-1807); Lieut. Timothy Mason (1745-1832); Isaac Hathaway (1729-1798); and Captain Phillip Mason (1745-1813). Capt. Philip Mason saw earlier service in the Revolution as head of the 12th (East Hoosuck) company under Col. Benjamin Simond's 2nd Berkshire regiment of the Massachusetts militia in June 1776. Lieutenant Timothy Mason served in Col. Simond's company of militia in 1776, under Capt. Shubael Wilmarth's 13th New Providence company and under Col. Stafford's independent company of volunteers from New Providence at Bennington in 1777. Two soldiers' graves in the Old Church-yard Cemetery not associated with the Revolutionary War are those of Captain Charles Converse (1774-1830) and Captain Shubael Wells (1797-1848): while the details of their military service is not known, they may have served in the War of 1812 as two of 10,000 militia men from Massachusetts.

Other graves of note include those of Nancy (Brown) Briggs (1762-1818), wife of Captain Allen Briggs, early settlers from Cumberland, RI, who first settled in Windsor. She was the mother of Whig Governor George N. Briggs of Massachusetts, who served as governor for six years from January 1844, to January 1851. Nancy Briggs father, Joseph Brown, is also buried in the Old Church-yard Cemetery. Brown came from Cumberland, RI, settled in what became Gageborough (now Windsor) adjacent to Cheshire, and fought in the Revolutionary War. Mrs. Isaac (Phoebe) Hathaway (born 1734), whose 1785 gravestone is the second oldest in the cemetery, was an early settler who bore 16 children, 13 living at her death. Betsy Read (Betty Reed), wife of Joshua Read (sometimes spelled "Reed"), is also buried here. She was the great-grandmother of Susan B. Anthony, and with her husband, an initial settler of New Providence from Scituate, RI. The cemetery also includes two early medical doctors: Dr. David Cushing (1767-1814) and Dr. William Jenckes (1755-1794). The latest stone in the cemetery, dated 1848, belongs to Captain Shubael Wells, whose death marks the waning years of the New Providence community on Staffords Hill.

(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Name of Property

Berkshire, MA

County and State

Art

The Old Church-yard Cemetery is eligible for the National Register in the area of significance of Art.

The relatively plain-speaking habits of the early Baptists and changing attitudes toward death from 1785-1848 are both reflected in the artwork or adornment of the gravestones in the Old Church-yard Cemetery. None of the extant stones in the cemetery display death's head or winged soul effigy motifs. Early stones between 1785 and 1800 are mostly undecorated and contain only the name of the deceased, birth and death dates, and a short verse. The predominant iconography in sheer numbers is the willow-and-urn motif, which became popular at the close of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century. Fifteen headstones out of 70, dating from 1812 to 1830, display this motif. Several stones feature classical motifs in arches, keystones, and side columns, some with fluting, thought to suggest that death is the gateway to heaven. Such classical touches were common national motifs at the time the stones were erected when the Greek Revival began to hold the national imagination.

Because this cemetery was put into use by 1785 and was an active burial ground until 1848, it predated the effects of the rural cemetery movement in the 19th Century. The layout has no careful design or artful landscape features. It is not picturesque, lacking winding pathways or layout reflecting the romance of nature worshippers. It is simply an early settlement burying ground atop a windy, cold, largely treeless summit. The maple trees along Jenks Road in front of the cemetery were mentioned as planted around the time of the 1913 work and clean-up in the cemetery. The few trees inside the stone walls, two pine and two oak, appear to have been seeded by being blown in by the wind. Because it was long abandoned by 1913, the work done at that time consisted of building a stone wall and putting in the iron entrance gate, as well as some grading and setting the stones upright. There was no attempt to realign the stones in strict rows or construct improvements such as walking paths, plantings, or other landscape features. The layout of the cemetery was essentially left alone so that it stands today for what it has always been: reminiscent of an early settlement burying ground, unaltered by the aesthetics of later fashion, except for the peripheral stone wall and iron gate. The 1913 stone wall that encloses the historic cemetery delineates boundaries that correspond to the 0.65 acres being nominated, as shown on the attached Assessors' map.

Archaeological Significance

Unmarked graves may contribute important information related to the cemetery boundaries and burial patterns of graves within the cemetery. Detailed study of the skeletal remains in the cemetery and funerary artifacts may contribute important information related to the overall health and pathologies of the Stafford Hill settlement population. Unmarked graves and any evidence associated with the 1770 meetinghouse may also contribute important information related to the early settlement of Cheshire and the end of the Stafford Hill settlement.

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information associated with the evolution and internal configuration of a small rural cemetery that developed in the western Massachusetts uplands from the late 18th through the mid 19th century. Additional historical research, combined with archaeological survey and testing, may contribute important evidence that indicates when the Old Church-yard Cemetery was established, possibly for a single dwelling, a family, or a residential cluster in this area of Jenks Road on Stafford Hill.

Historical and archaeological evidence may also contribute important evidence related to burial patterns used in the Old Church-yard Cemetery, and how those patterns may have changed over time. Important evidence may exist that shows how burial patterns may have changed as the burial ground's function changed from use by a single family or residence to a larger residential cluster or neighborhood burial ground. Evidence may also survive that identifies areas of the cemetery used exclusively for the burial of paupers, unknown persons, and indigents or other socio/economic groupings. The latter evidence may contribute important information related to the way the local community and town treated their less-fortunate residents in death.

(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Name of Property

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Individual and groups of burials may contribute important evidence related to the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of residents in the Jenks Road locale, and, by extrapolation, the residents of the Stafford Hill area and town of Cheshire. Detailed analysis of the material culture and skeletal remains of individual burials may contribute important evidence associated with religious beliefs and economic status of individuals, families and the residents of the Jenks Road/Stafford Hill area. Osteological study of skeletal remains may also contribute important physical descriptions of individuals and pathologies that affected the residents of the Jenks Road neighborhood and town. Important evidence may survive that documents how different occupations affected the physical well being of sexes, individuals, families, or other socioeconomic groupings.

(end)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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(continued)

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Name of Property

Berkshire, MA
County and State

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Maps:

Beers, F. W. *County Atlas of Berkshire*. R. T. White & Co., Plates 39, 41.

(end)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: CHESHIRE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MHC# CHS.803

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Name of Property

Berkshire, MA
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Old Church-yard Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Cheshire
County: Berkshire **State:** MA
Photographer: Norene Roberts
Date Photographed: June 10, 2005

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. View facing north from iron gate/entrance on Jenks Road
2. View facing north at cemetery sign outside stone wall on Jenks Road
3. View facing east at Hannah Hoskins' stone (1792)
4. View facing east at Dr. David Cushing's stone (1814)
5. View facing east at Stephen Carpenter's stone (1815)
6. View facing east at Capt. Charles Converse's stone (1830)

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Cheshire
street & number Town Hall, 74 Main Street telephone (413) 743-1690
city or town Cheshire state MA zip code 01225

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Old Church-yard Cemetery (CHS.803), Cheshire, Massachusetts
District Data Sheet

Item	Date	Style	Material	Bldg./Site/Object	C or NC
Cemetery	1785-1848			S	C
Perimeter stone wall/iron gate	1913		stone	St	C
Cemetery sign	ca. 1960-1980		wooden	O	NC
Representative headstones:					
Mrs. Amey Carpenter	1785	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Phoebe Hathaway	1785	undecorated	red sandstone	O	C
Ephriam Willmarth	1785	urn	white marble	O	C
Hannah Hoskins	1792	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Lucey Brown	1794	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Dr William Jenks	1794	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Melindy Flack	1796	undecorated	slate	O	C
Isaac Hathaway	1798	undecorated	red sandstone	O	C
Joseph Brown	1807	urn	white marble	O	C
Lydia Fisk	1807	Undecorated	white marble	O	C
Rev. Peter Werden	1808	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Benjamin Brown	1809	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Elijah Goff	1812	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Chloe Mason	1812	oval foliate	white marble	O	C
Clarissa Wilmarth	1812	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Capt. Peter Mason	1813	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Dr. David Cushing	1814	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Stephen Carpenter	1815	classical	white marble	O	C
Hopestill Dexter	1815	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Betsy Read	1815	Undecorated	white marble	O	C
Col. Peter Werden	1816	foliate	white marble	O	C
Nancy [Brown] Briggs	1818	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Lydia Fisk	1819	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Allan Brown, Esq.	1820	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Joseph Manchester	1821	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Rebecca Luther	1822	fancy top, shouldered	white marble	O	C
Julia Cushing	1829	classical	white marble	O	C

Old Church-yard Cemetery (CHS.803), Cheshire, Massachusetts
District Data Sheet (continued)

Capt. Charles Converse	1830	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Lieut. Timothy Mason	1832	oval and fans	white marble	O	C
Rebecca Converse	1835	willow and urn	white marble	O	C
Freelove Cushing	1843	undecorated	white marble	O	C
Capt. Shubael Wells	1848	undecorated	white marble	O	C

Totals:

Contributing sites	1
Contributing structure	1
Contributing objects	32
Non-contributing objects	1
 TOTAL	 35



#1

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Jenks Road, Town of Cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA

Photographer: Morene Roberts
June 10, 2005

Orig. neg. Cheshire Historical Commission

View facing north from iron gate/entrance
on Jenks Road.

THE SITE OF THE FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH

in western Massachusetts
ORGANIZED AUG. 28, 1769

Known as

+ THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
OF NEW PROVIDENCE

Pastored by Elder Peter Werden
until his death - February 21, 1808

*Here lie the bodies of those early church-
founders until the Resurrection Day when
a nobler body they shall find. ☩*

#2

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Jenks Road, Town of Cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA.

photographer: Morene Roberts
June 10, 2005

Orig. neg. Cheshire Historical Commission

View facing north at cemetery sign outside
stone wall on Jenks Road



In Memory of
Hannah Hoskins
Daughter of
Joshua Hoskins
And Lyda his wife
was born in Trunto
June 28th 1746
And Died october
9th 1792 Aged 46

#3

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Jenks Road, Town of cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA.

photographer: Morene Roberts
June 10, 2005

Orig. neg: Cheshire Historical
Commission

View facing east at Hannah
Hoskin's grave (1792)



In Memory of
Doct^r DAVID CUSHING
who departed this life
Sept^r 31, 1814;
in the 47th year
of his age!

*The fragile man is passing swift
And monuments of Brass & Stone decay
On friendship's tablet shall thy memory live
Till time is o'er and recollections past*

#4

Old Churchyard Cemetery
Jents Road, Town of Cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA

photographer: Norene Roberts
June 10, 2005

orig. neg: Cheshire Historical
Commission

View facing east at Dr. David
Cushing's stone (1814),



THE
MONUMENT

is erected in
Memory of
STEPHEN WARDWELL
who died 17th
1815 in 72 years
of his age.

He was a member of the
First Baptist Church
in Chelsea, Mass. He
died on the 17th of the
month of June 1815, and
was buried in the burying
ground in Chelsea, Mass.
He was a member of the
Chelsea Baptist Church.

#5

Old Church-yard Cemetery
Jenks Road, Town of Cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA

Photographer: Morene Roberts
June 10, 2005

Orig. neg.: Cheshire Historical
Commission

View facing east at Stephen
Carpenter stone (1815),



THIS MONUMENT

Is erected to the memory of
Capt CHARLES CONVERSE,
who died Jan. 31, 1820
in the 57 years of his age.

*When in death's cold embrace the body lies,
The soul is gone to find the way
To that great sleep, and none be heard no more
Till the last trumpet shall sound; my charge is
done.*



#6

Old Church-Yard Cemetery
Jenks Road, Town of Cheshire
Berkshire Co., MA

photographer: Morene Roberts
June 10, 2005

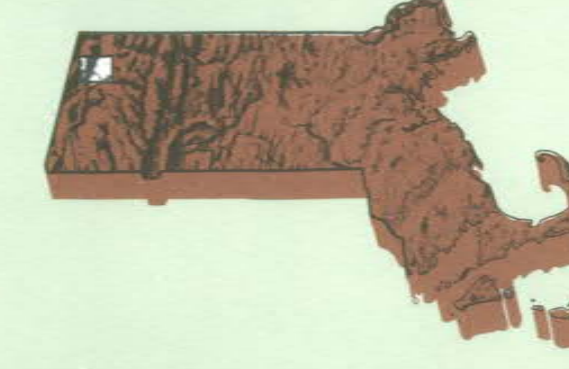
orig neg: Cheshire Historical Commission

View facing east at Capt. Charles
Converse stone (1830)

USGS
United States Geological Survey

OLD CHURCH-YARD CEMETERY
Cheshire CHESHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS (BERKSHIRE)
MA

1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
1997

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Derived from imagery taken 1981 and other sources
Photorevised using imagery taken 1998; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1984. Boundaries revised 2000
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1000-meter grid. Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18 10 000-foot ticks. Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 6 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet	1997	2000	1	2	3
1	3.2808	11° 15'	11° 15'	4	5	6
2	6.5617	11° 15'	11° 15'	7	8	
3	9.8425	11° 15'	11° 15'			
4	13.1234	11° 15'	11° 15'			
5	16.4042	11° 15'	11° 15'			
6	19.6850	11° 15'	11° 15'			
7	22.9659	11° 15'	11° 15'			
8	26.2467	11° 15'	11° 15'			
9	29.5275	11° 15'	11° 15'			
10	32.8084	11° 15'	11° 15'			

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (GNI) and 2000 magnetic declination (MD) at center of map. Diagram is approximate.

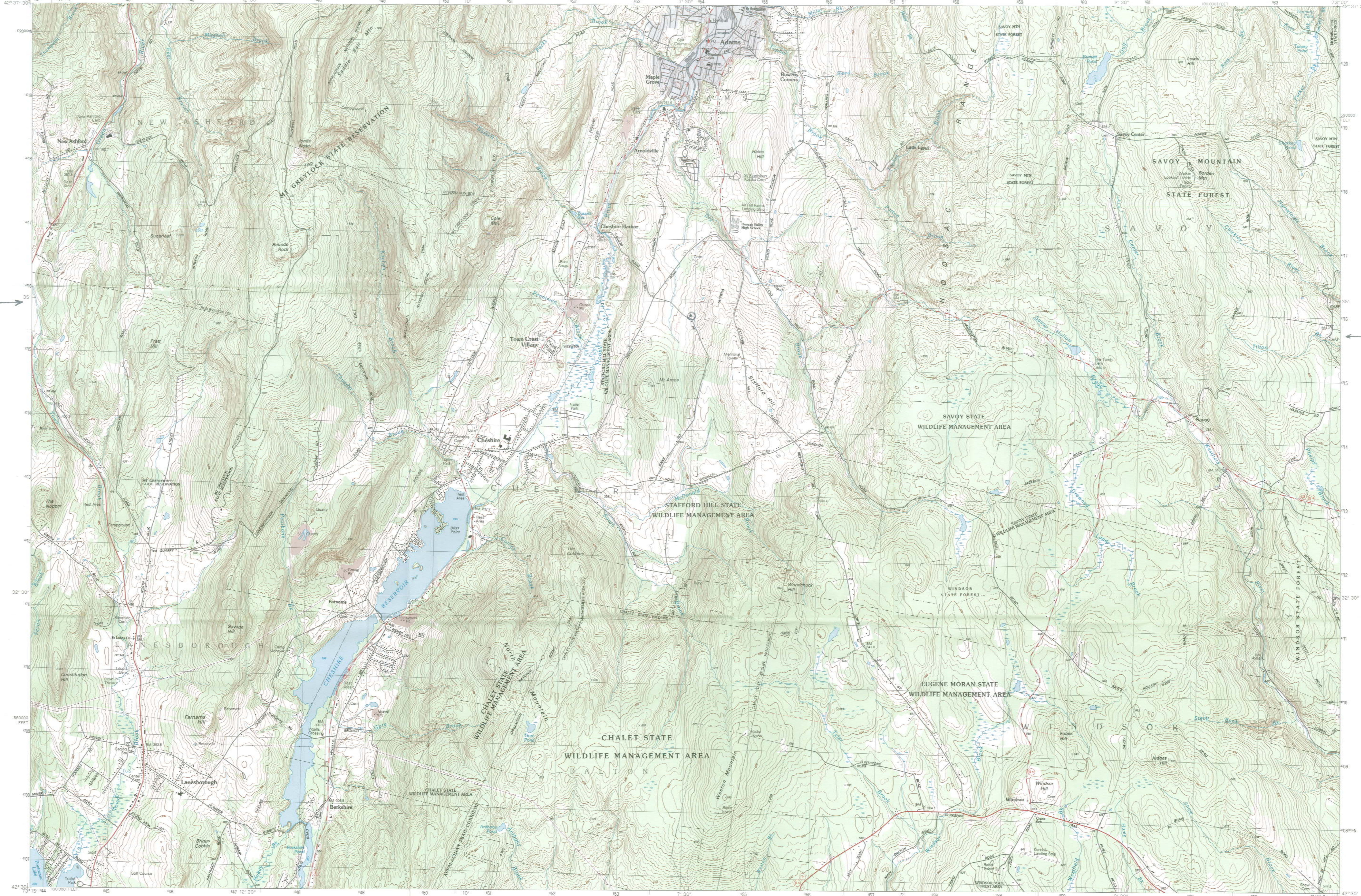
1 Berlin	2 North Adams	3 Rowe	4 Southwestern Center
5 Putnam West	6 Putnam East	7 Goshen	

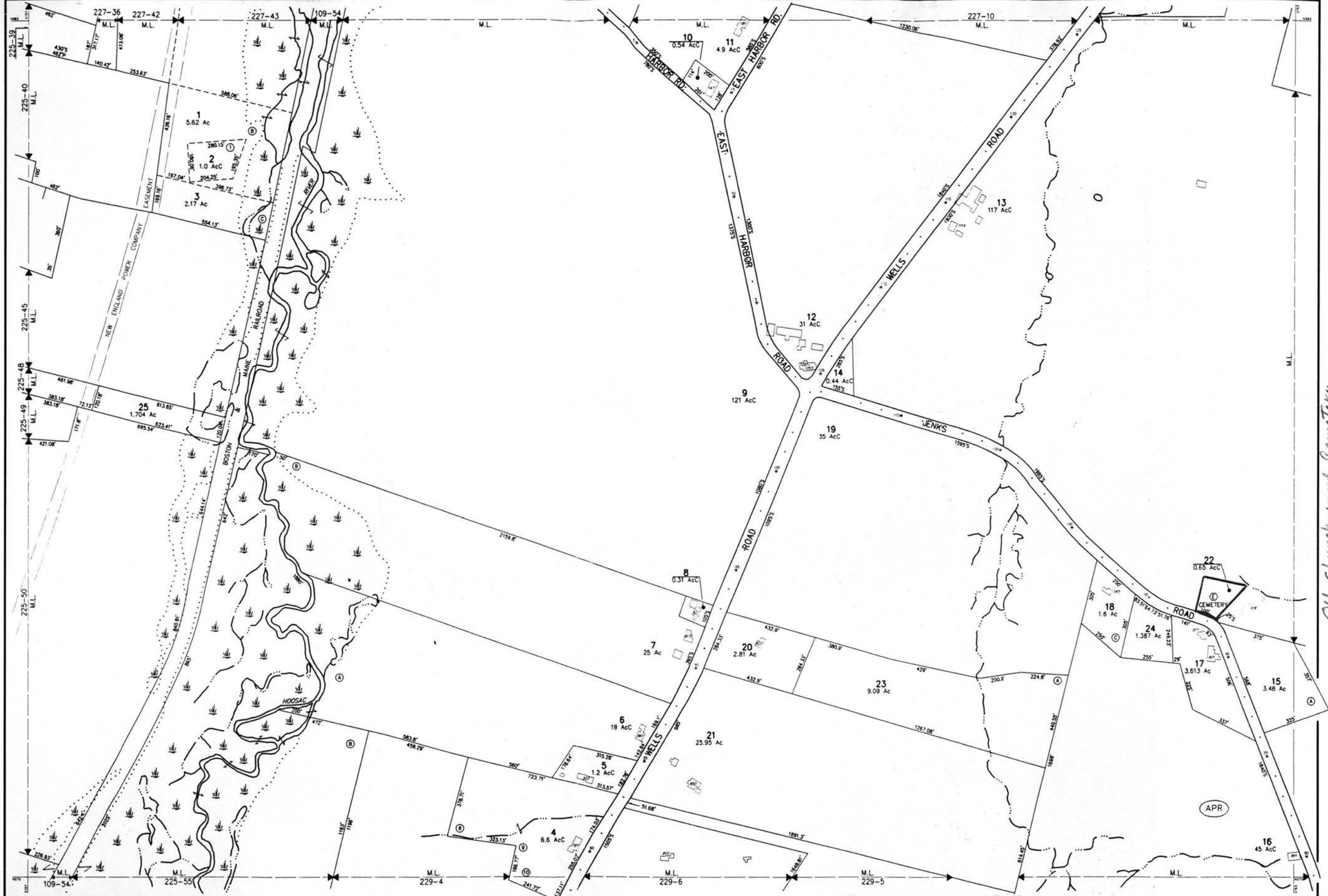
ISBN 0-607-94017-4
9 780607 940174

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Unimproved road, trail	
Route marker: Interstate, U. S., State	
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge	
Bridge: drawbridge	
Footbridge: overpass; underpass	
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	
Roads: barn; church; school; large structure	
Boundary:	
National, with monument	
State	
County, parish	
Civil township, precinct, district	
Incorporated city, village, town	
National or State reservation; small park	
Land grant with monument; round section corner	
U. S. public lands survey; range, township, section	
Range, township, section line; location approximate	
Fence or field line	
Power transmission line, located tower	
Dam; dam with lock	
Cemetery; grave	
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	
Wellhead; water well; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; shaft or cave	
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	
Dilatated surface: strip mine, lava; sand	
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate	
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Rapids; large and small; falls; large and small	
Swamp; marsh	
Saltmarsh; marsh; land subject to saltwater inundation	
Woodland: scattered trees	
Scrub; mangrove	
Orchard; vineyard	

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225





Old Church-yard Cemetery
 Jenks Rd, Cheshire
 Berkshire Co. MA

THIS MAP IS FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES. IT IS NOT VALID FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTION OR CONVEYANCE.

THE HORIZONTAL DATUM IS THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD27 FEET.

THE ORIGINAL PROPERTY MAPS WERE PREPARED AND COMPLETED IN 1986 BY CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATES, INC.

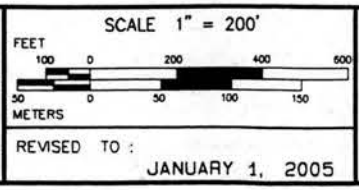
COMPLETION DATE: JUNE 18, 1986
 PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: MARCH 22, 1985

DIGITIZED IN 1999 BY
CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOC. INC.
 PROFESSIONAL GIS CONSULTANTS
 MUNICIPAL MAPPING - GIS - PUBLIC WORKS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
 11 PLEASANT STREET, P.O. BOX 267, LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03561
 (603)444-6768 - 1(800)322-4540 - FAX (603)444-1366
 WWW.CAI-INFO.COM

AREA SURVEYED Ac
 AREA CALCULATED Ac
 RECORD DIMENSION 100'
 SCALED DIMENSION 100'S
 MATCH LINE M.L.
 BUILDING AND BUILDING NUMBER
 SURFACE WATER PROPERTY LINE
 SURFACE WATER NOT A PROPERTY LINE

LEGEND

EMPTY PROPERTY (1)
 SUBDIVISION LOT NO. (2)
 BLOCK LIMIT
 RIGHT OF WAY
 COMMON OWNERSHIP
 WETLANDS
 SURFACE WATER NOT A PROPERTY LINE



PROPERTY MAPS

CHESHIRE

MASSACHUSETTS

INDEX DIAGRAM

226	227	236
225	228	237
224	229	236

MAP NO. **228**

National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2016

Old Church-yard Cemetery

Name of Property

Berkshire, MA

County and State

precise original location in relation to the cemetery is unknown. This original meetinghouse was stripped of useful appurtenances, moved around 1820, and remodeled as a Glebe or Ministerial House for the church farm. According to church records, the "sound and seasoned timbers" were dragged by oxen to the north slope of Stafford Hill Road about three-quarters of a mile northeast of the cemetery. ~~It stands today at 18 Stafford Hill Road as a much-altered private house, with a five-bay façade, two stories, and a hipped-roof, one-story front porch, and is known as the Valentine Bowen House (CHS.18). Because the congregation used this as a ministerial house after its move, Valentine Bowen was not actually the first occupant.*~~ The second meetinghouse was built, according to William Browne, a local historian writing in a 1938 article, "almost opposite the homestead of [Joab] Stafford not far from where the Stafford Memorial stands today and within about a half mile from the Old Church-yard Cemetery." The new church building was dedicated January 1, 1818, used until 1843, and then stood decaying and empty until around 1855, when it was torn down. The date of 1843, when the second meetinghouse was abandoned, essentially ended the old New Providence settlement at Stafford Hill. The last burial in the Old Church-yard Cemetery in 1848 is roughly contemporaneous with the demise of the settlement.

In its heyday between 1790 and 1843, the New Providence settlement on Stafford Hill contained some 40 houses and an estimated population of around 1,500. Very little evidence of the settlement remains today. In addition to the five cemeteries associated with the settlement, there are several surviving houses, but none on the summit of Stafford Hill. Three of these houses are on Jenks Road: the 1768 Captain Samuel Low House (CHS.21), the 1768 Daniel Coman/Joseph Bennett House (CHS.23), and the 1770 Nicholas Brown House (CHS.20). Other extant houses from the settlement include the 1805 Captain Daniel Smith House on Fales Road (CHS.36); and two on Stafford Hill Road: the 1775 Richardson/Brayton House (CHS.19) and the 1776 Valentine Bowen House (CHS.18). The rest of the settlement has vanished. Mid 19th-century local histories note that even wells were filled in and buildings moved (some north across the town line to Adams) or disassembled for the wood. Based on the recollections of 94-year-old Julia Sherman Hunt, *The Berkshire Hills* published an article on Stafford Hill in December 1900. The magazine writes of the ca. 1860 removal of the last vestiges of the New Providence buildings:

The disappearance of all the signs of settlement of Stafford's Hill, with the exception of the old burying ground, has not been due entirely to the action of time, although desertion and neglect have had much to do with it. About forty years ago a son of Daniel Smith, the brother of David Smith, bought up all the remains of the buildings on the summit, and sold the undecayed timber and foundation stones, which were removed away.

There is currently one property listed in the National Register of Historic Places commemorating part of the history of New Providence. Placed on the Register in February 1986, the Stafford Memorial Tower (CHS.902) on Stafford Hill Road is located on the southwest corner of what was originally Col. Joab Stafford's land, House Lot #5. The monument, erected in 1927 by the Sons of the American Revolution, is 25 feet tall and made of random rubble fieldstone. This commemorative tower includes an arched marble sarcophagus, with the original tombstone with draped urn motif containing the remains of Col. Joab Stafford. The tower was the location of five bronze plaques, placed between the tower arches after 1929, commemorating events in Col. Stafford's life. (Two plaques were stolen by vandals by 1985, and the other three have been removed.) Stafford was originally buried in the Wells/The Notch cemetery (CHS.807), one of five cemeteries associated with the early New Providence Baptist settlement in what is now the Town of Cheshire. The Wells/The Notch cemetery is located on the south side of Windsor Road, north of MacDonald Brook, behind and south of the Gus Martin farm at 594 Windsor Road. It is at the bottom of Stafford Hill about three-quarters of a mile southeast of the Stafford Memorial. Today, it contains only 14 remaining stones, dating between 1773 and 1842. From this early cemetery, Stafford's remains were removed and reinterred at the Memorial in 1927. Col. Stafford has been described by

(continued)

* *Valentine Bowen's House (CHS.18) is on the south side of Stafford Hill. The glebe lot and ministerial house were on the North Side. Corrected Feb. 2016*

&a20CUNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
&a30CNATIONAL PARK SERVICE

&a22CNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
&a29CEVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Old Churchyard Cemetery
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 3/02/12¹⁶ &pW DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: &pW DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/17/12¹⁶
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000206

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4/14/2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

&a4L

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Additional Documentation
REVIEWER Patricia Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 4/14/2016

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Old Churchyard Cemetery
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 3/02/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/27/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/11/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/18/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000206

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4.16.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

February 29, 2012

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Old Church-Yard Cemetery, Jenks Road, Cheshire (Berkshire), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

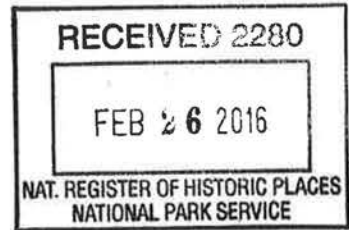
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Norene Roberts, consultant
Diane Hitter, Eileen Nutter, Cheshire Historical Commission
Carol Francesconi, Cheshire Board of Selectmen
Bernard Bator, Cheshire Planning Board



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

February 12, 2016

J. Paul Loether
Chief, National Register of Historic Places/National Landmarks Program
National Park Service 2280, 8th Floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Additional Documentation for Old Church-yard Cemetery, Cheshire (Berkshire
County), Massachusetts (NRIND 4/16/2012)

12,000 206

Dear Mr. Loether:

We have recently been made aware of an error in documentation for the above referenced property.

I am enclosing a corrected page 10 of the nomination.

Please let me know if you need anything else to bring your files on this submission up to date.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

Cc: Noreen Roberts, Preservation Consultant
Barry Emery, Cheshire Historical Commission