

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only
received **AUG 31 1982**
date entered

1. Name

historic Lenox Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

and/or common The "Church on the Hill" (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Lenox N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~
state Massachusetts code 025 county Berkshire code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name United Church of Christ, The "Church on the Hill"/ Town of Lenox
street & number 65 Main Street/Town Hall, Walker Street
city, town Lenox N/A vicinity of state Mass. 01240

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds
street & number Bank Row

city, town Pittsfield state Mass. 01201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of
title the Commonwealth #61 has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date March 15, 1979 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 294 Washington Street,

city, town Boston state Mass. 02108

7. Description

Lenox Congregational Church, Main St., Lenox

Condition		Check one	Check one
☒ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☒ altered	☐ moved
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		date _____ N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lenox Congregational Church or the "Church on the Hill" is located on the west side of Main Street (Route 7A) at the northern end of Lenox Village in the Lenox Local Historic District. The church, a large highstyle Federal period structure, is a focal point of the district which is composed predominately of late 18th and 19th century residential and civic buildings. This nomination comprises 6 acres, including the village cemetery which contains gravestones dating from the late 18th century to the present.

Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, in his Travels in New England and New York, relates, standing on the hill overlooking Lenox in September 1798, and remarking "Lenox is the Shire Town of the county... located principally on a single street, upon a ridge, ... exhibits many proofs of prosperity, ... The public buildings consist of a church, a courthouse, a school house, and a goal." (Dwight: Vol. 2, P. 386; 1821)

The present church was built on or near the site of the town's first Meeting House which it replaced. It is a woodframed rectangular gable-roofed structure with a two story frontispiece and a steeple on the south facade. The overall massiveness of the building is lightened by attenuated architectural details emphasizing verticality. Notable architectural features include a palladian window centered in the frontispiece, slender corner pilasters, and a narrow modillioned cornice. The center entry exhibits similar proportions and is relatively simple: flanking pilasters support an open pediment. The steeple is composed of three stages. The first is a heavy rectangular clock tower topped by a light balustrade; the second is an octagonal belfry with louvered arched openings, a full Doric entablature and a balustrade; the third is an octagonal cupola with oval shuttered openings and a full entablature.

From the "Articles of Agreement" drawn up on the 19th of October, 1803, between Benjamin D. Goodrich, Joiner, of Richmond, Massachusetts, and a Contracting Committee of the Town, consisting of William Walker, Caleb Hyde, Oliver Belding, Jr., Joseph Goodwin, Joseph Newell, Nathaniel Miller and Ebenezer Williams, we learned that the former will "erect, building and finish a Meeting House. The body of the House to be sixty-four feet long and fifty feet wide and a projection of eight feet by twenty-six feet at the south end for a tower or steeple, the Posts of the House to be twenty-seven feet high; to be forty-six pews on the lower floor comfortable to the plan adopted by the Town; to be thirteen pews in the Gallery, besides two pews to be made and raised over the stairs; the upper Pillars to be of the Ionic order with Capitals of the same order; the arch over the body of the House to be elliptical arched; the flooring over and under the gallery to be horizontal; the front gallery to be made in a circular manner with four posts in the side gallery. The Pulpit to be built upon a post with a Corinthian Capital with two flights of stairs, the railing and banister of which to be of good Cherry or Mahogany; the pews below to be built of stuff nine-eighths of an inch thick when worked; the windows to be twenty-four squares each, the glass nine by eleven, except the Venetian and other ornamental windows which are to be portioned sizes, all well fixed

(cont'd)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Lenox Congregational Church

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

1

with patent springs; to be a double door in the front of the tower, and a single door in each end of the same; the roof and sides to be boarded with good, sound hemlock boards; all the inside work below and the front of the galleries to be done with good clean stuff; to be well painted inside and out with three coats, and to be plastered with three coats; the shingles to be laid out not more than five and one-fourth inches out; the clapboard to be laid out not more than six inches and to lap at least two inches; the bell to be hung and suitable apparatus provided for it; a lightning rod to be put up, made of refined iron of suitable bigness with an elegant iron vane and brass ball properly gilt and ornamental; the steeple and workmanship of it to be made comparable to the plan of a steeple laid down in Plate No. 33 in Benjamin's Country Builders Assistant."

The "Church on the Hill" has suffered almost no exterior changes since its original construction except protective wood panels applied over leaded glass windows of the upper lantern and a rear projection for a larger pulpit. Like most New England churches, it has suffered the indignity of several interior alterations from its original form during the Victorian Era. These largely reflect the views of the church's congregation about what a church should look like. Its box pews were removed and pew slips substituted, the center alley abolished, and the raised pulpit and raised front gallery lowered in 1840. Two stoves and chimneys were installed prior to 1836. Choir stalls were installed in the rear of the church in 1850, and a small organ called a Seraphin was purchased for \$142.00. The present Johnson Tracker pipe organ was installed in 1868. In 1880 the present pulpit projection was added to the rear of the building along with the Robinson's Family's donation of the wrought iron fence around the property. Electricity, oil heat, and a fresh painted white interior came in 1950.

To date, no archaeological features have been identified in association with the church. However, subsurface testing may identify artifactual deposits and subsurface features such as privies and possibly the remains of the first Meetinghouse relating to 18th and 19th century occupation of the site.

8. Significance

Lenox Congregational Church, Main St., Lenox, MA

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

Specific dates

1802-1805

Builder/Architect

Mr. Benjamin D. Goodrich

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lenox Congregational Church, or the "Church on the Hill" possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. In addition to its role as a house of worship it gains community development significance in having provided a larger, more elaborate meeting place for a growing frontier county seat in the early 19th century. It served as a podium for several guest speakers of both local and national prominence. Architecturally, the building shows the influences of Asher Benjamin and Charles Bulfinch, both Boston base architects of the period. The success of the design demonstrated the competency and skillful eye of its provincial builder, Benjamin D. Goodrich. Thus, the Lenox Congregational Church meets (Criteria A,B,C) of the National Register of Historic Places.

The Congregational Church in Lenox was established in 1769 by the Rev. Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) of Great Barrington. It was not until November of 1770 that its first pastor was ordained, Mr. Samuel Munson, a graduate of Yale College. His salary was 45^l a year which was increased to 60^l a year prior to his dismissal in 1793. Dr. Samuel Shepard, his successor, indicated that "the moral and religious aspects of the place (Lenox) was very gloomy due to his ill health which limited his efforts to oppose the current of vice and irreligion" in the community (Wood: 42, 50: 1964). A Meetinghouse, 46' x 36' was constructed circa 1775 on the site of the present church. The proprietors rejected a prior site on the Minister's lot No. for "a piece of land sequestered for that purpose by the heirs of Rev. Peter Reynolds, lying on the east end of the mountain" (Beers: Vol. 2, P. 290; 1885). The deed dated September 22, 1770, sets aside three acres in the Town of Lenox "for the use, benefit and improvement of siting a Meetinghouse thereon, a burying yard or lot." This gift and later erection of the first church set a development pattern for Lenox. Since it was recorded by J.W. Barber in a pair of engravings, "A North" and "A South" view of Lenox in 1838, the site has remained little changed.

Lenox was chosen as the site of the County Seat in 1787 when the County Court was moved from Great Barrington. It remained until moved to Pittsfield in 1868. A dilapidated Meetinghouse built in 1775 appeared ill fitting and undersized for the Town's expanding population. At a special Town Meeting on April 18, 1803, it was voted to begin "building on the meetinghouse lot or near the place of the present Meetinghouse." (Wood: 43: 1964)

Benjamin Goodrich was responsible for all materials and work, except the stone foundation and bell. He was paid \$4833.33 in three payments, the last October 1, 1805. Comparison of the present building with Asher Benjamin's Plate No. 33, in the Country Builders Assistant, does show a striking similarity of both the steeple and the entire Meetinghouse. From the design, obvious similarities also exist to the Charles Bulfinch influenced churches of Dalton, Lee, Pittsfield, and Richmond. All four of these churches have been lost to us by fire, neglect and changing times.

(cont'd)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lenox, Massachusetts, Shire Town, By Daniel H. Wood, Published by the Town, 1969

The History of Berkshire County, David Dudley Field, 1829

The History of Berkshire County, J.E.A. Smith ed., J.W. Beers & Co., N.Y. 1885

Centennial Anniversary of the Dedication of the Old Church on the Hill,

10. Geographical Data June 12, 1906, Sun Printing Co., Pittsfield, 1908

Acreage of nominated property 6 acres, Country Builders Assistant, Asher Benjamin

Quadrangle name U.S.G.S. Quad Stockbridge, MA

Quadrangle scale 1: 25 000

UMT References

A 18 641440 4691370
Zone Easting Northing

B 18 641410 4691300
Zone Easting Northing

C 18 641230 4691370

D 18 641250 4691460

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification "To all People to whom these Presents shall come--Greeting--Know--ye that we, Samuel Reynolds of Somers, Peter Reynolds, John Reynolds, Simeon Field and Margaret Field of Enfield all in the County of Hartford and colony of Connecticut in New England, for; and in considera-

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Virginia H. Adams, Program Assistant, with
name/title James N. Parrish, Historic Preservation Planner and Nancy D. Marasco,
Chairman, Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 1982

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts 02108

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 Valerie Ann Talmage

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date Aug. 24, 1982

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

9/30/82

for William Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormLenox Congregational
Church

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

The Second Minister of the Congregational Church, Rev. Samuel Shepard, (1773-1846) held the position for over fifty years. Ordained April 30, 1795, he took a strong interest in the betterment of the community; its moral fiber as well as its education. He served as Trustee of Williams College and nearby Lenox Academy. As the Congregational Church was the established church until 1834 when church and state was officially separated in Lenox, the Rev. Shepard took an active role in the carrying out of justice in the county courts. A copy of the sermon and exhortation that was preached to Ephriam Wheeler on February 20, 1806, the day of his execution for the rape of his daughter Betsy Wheeler, indicated that it was delivered to the condemned man in the recently completed church while under guard by a company of militia, and seated upon his own coffin. The prisoner was then marched down the Main Street to "Gallows Hill" on the southwest side of West Street. A dozen similar capital punishments occurred in this manner between 1787 and 1826 (Wood: P 63-64: 1964). Rev. Samuel Shepard celebrated his fiftieth anniversary April 30, 1845. He had baptized 969 and married 273 during his service to the community. He died January 6, 1846. His epitaph reads: "Remember the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you."

The church's fourth minister, Rev. Edward K. Alden, was called from Boston to the church in 1854. He went on to become the Secretary of the American Board of Missions in 1859. To date, twenty-one ministers have served the church and Town. Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst (1874-1880) and Dr. Frederick Lynch (1899-1904) were highly regarded. Several prominent guest speakers and clergy have spoken in the church. Statesman Robert Rantoul delivered an Independence Day Address there July 4, 1838. William Ellery Channing gave his last formal public address in the building August 1, 1842 upon the occasion of his retirement. Henry Ward Beecher, author of The Star Papers and Richard Salton Storr occasionally preached from its pulpit. On one visit prior to 1855, Beecher, remarking on the view from the porch of the church said, "I'd rather be a door keeper in this House of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of of wickedness," (Centennial of the Church on the Hill: 1908). A list of its more notable early church members reads like a Who's Who of early Berkshire Soldiers and Statesmen and includes: Jonathan Hinsdale; Thomas Tracey; Samuel Goodrich; Allen Goodrich; Lemuel Collins; Deacon Charles Mattoon; Dr. Eldrad Lewis; Thomas Rockwell; Enos Stone; Rev. Elisha Yale; William Walker; and Maj. Gordon Hollister.

The cemetery west of the church is the original town cemetery and was associated with the first Meetinghouse, as well as the present church. Its gravestones represent the history of the church and the town from their founding to the present. In 1972 Serge Koussevitzky, director and founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Tanglewood Festival in Lenox, was buried there.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Lenox Congregational Item number 10

Page 1

tion of the love, goodwill and affection we have and bear to the Town and People of Lenox in the County of Berkshire and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Have given and granted, and by these Presents do freely, clearly and absolutely, give and grant unto the Town and people of said Lenox, their heirs and assigns--

"Three Acres of Land lying and being in the Township of Lenox aforesaid for the use, benefit, and improvement of siting a Meeting House; thereon, a Burying Yard or Lot &c.; for the benefit and utility of the People and Town of Lenox aforesaid forever, or so long as it shall be used and improved for the Purposes aforesaid.

"In Witness whereof We have hereunto set our hands and Seals the 22nd day of September in the tenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third of Great Britain &c.; King, Annoq: Dom: 1770--

"Received and Recorded from the original
March 31, 1771

"M. Hopkins, Reg'r."

Daniel Williams to the Inhabitants of Lenox; Book 81, Page 135, In consideration of \$27.50 paid by the Inhabitants of S'd Town of Lenox....give, grant, seal and convey.... A certain tract or parcel of land situated in S'd Lenox, a little southerly of the Congregational Church in S'd Lenox, described thus, to wit-- Beginning at a stake and stones in the west side of the highway leading from Lenox Court House to Pittsfield and in the south line of the road running westerly in front of the above mentioned church, then running west eleven degrees north on S'd road five rods and nine links to a stake and stones, thence south fourteen degrees west fourteen rods and two links to a stake and stones, thence south twenty-one degrees west nine rods to a stake and stones in the west line of S'd highway, thence on said highway north twnty-six degrees, east twenty-four rods and twenty links to the bounds beginning at
Containing forty-four rods of land.

It is agreed that the land hereby conveyed is forever to remain unenclosed as a public common and it is further agreed by the parties that the ground and soil shall not be dug or plowed within nine feet of my east line at any time hereafter.

Signed: Daniel Williams, Lenox, March 29, 1832 before Joseph Tucker, Justice of the Peace, Recorded June 4, 1832.

The Church on the Hill is located at the northern end of Lenox Village in the Lenox local historic district. It occupies the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Lenox Congregational Item number ¹⁰
 Church

Page 2

northeastern one-third of a six acre plot bounded easterly on Main Street (Route 7A), and southerly on Greenwood Street. The six acre plot is a composite of the land granted the Town of Lenox in the two above mentioned deeds. It has a frontage on Greenwood Street of 715'. From Greenwood Street the cemetery's west boundry runs 425' to a northwest corner. The northern boundry runs 730' to the highway (Main Street/Route 7A). Its easterly boundry parallels the highway (Main Street/Route 7A) 335'. A bench mark of 1318' elevation is located in the highway at the northeast corner of the property. (See USGS Stockbridge Quad. Map 1.)

A further description can be found in the Middle Berkshire Registry of Deeds, Bood 337, Page 232 and Page 234, Lenox Cengregational Church, Petitioner to Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Land Court, July 9, 1907.

The nomination is confined to the church and cemetery because they are outstanding local points of the existing local district and because there is currently local opposition to formation of another district.

Assessor's Map of Lenox, Mass. 18C
Cole-East, Inc. 1967, Scale 1" = 100'

502 400 N

117 500 E

18A-1

18A-2

LENOX, MASS.
Lenox Congregational
Church

Assessor's Map of Lenox
18C
Cole-East, Inc.
1967
Scale 1" = 100'

ASPINWALL

ROAD

TOWN CEMETERY
ON-THE-HILL

Church

1
6 AC.

GREENWOOD

STREET

STREET

100'

17D-39

200'

200'

390'

264.6'

190'

50.4'

325'

192'

265'

306.75'

265'

70'

1025'

525'

680'

70'

93.25'

86.23'

145
8050
99.26'

169.9'

120'

160.41'

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Church on the Hill
Berkshire County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 9/31/82-2373
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83
Date Due: 9/30/82 - 10/15/82
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 9/30/82
☐ RETURN
Entered in the National Register REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
☐ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below
☐ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Lenox - church on the Hill

ART MARASCO
PHOTOGRAPHER
LENOX, MASS. 01240

MAR 18 1981

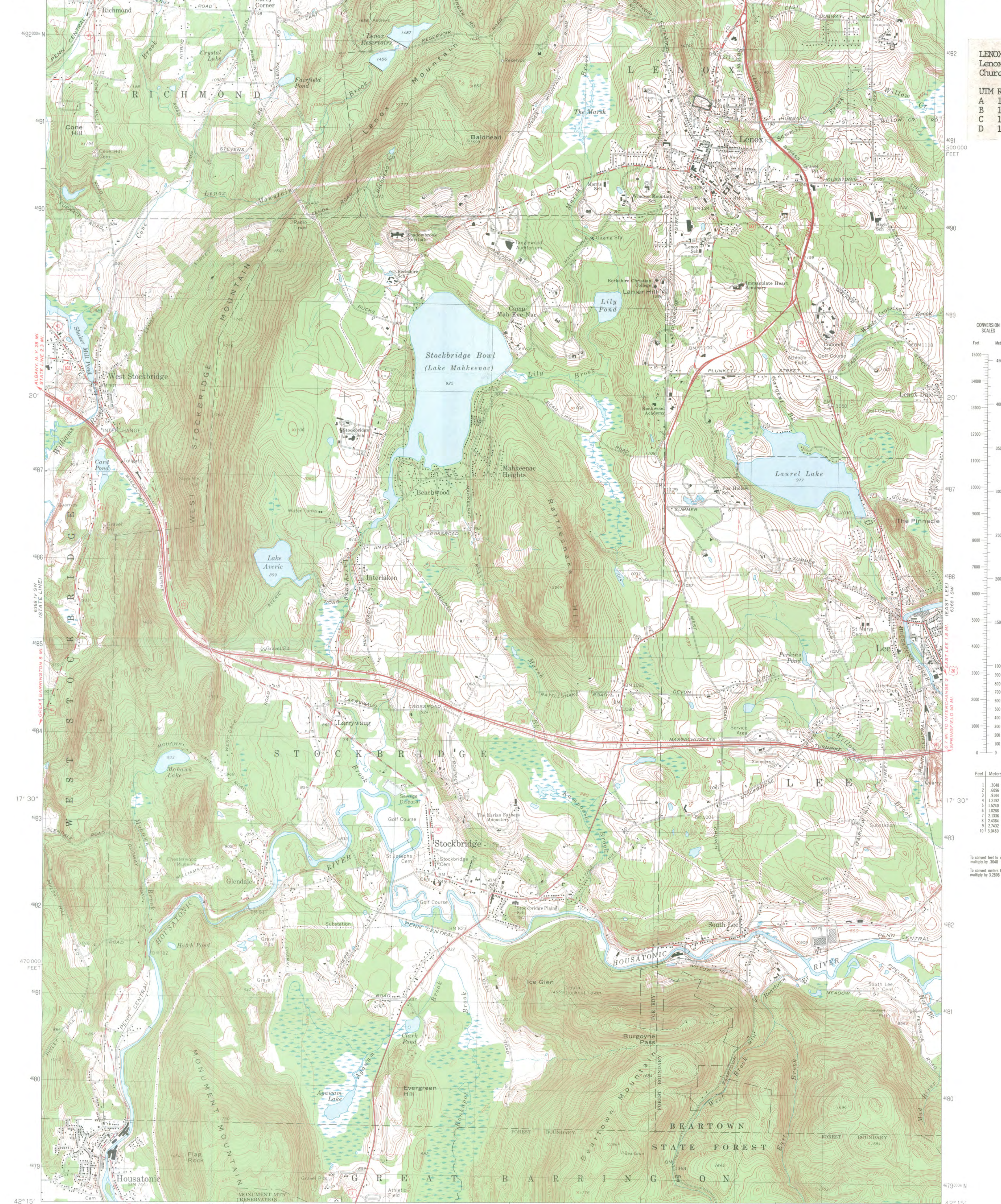
ART MARASCO
PHOTOGRAPHER
611 EAST STREET
LENOX, MASS. 01240

LENOX, MASS.

Lenox Congregational Church

March 1981

Negative filed with photographer, Art Morasco
Lenox, Mass. View northwest. Photo 1 of 1



LENOX, MASS.
Lenox Congregational Church

UTM References:
A 18/641440/469370
B 18/641410/4691300
C 18/641230/4691370
D 18/641250/4691460

CONVERSION SCALES	
Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3800
12000	3600
11000	3400
10000	3200
9000	3000
8000	2800
7000	2600
6000	2400
5000	2200
4000	2000
3000	1800
2000	1600
1000	800
500	400
200	160
100	80
0	0

Feet	Meters
1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters multiply by 3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808



**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

August 24, 1982

Mr. Jerry Rogers
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Adams - Phillips Woolen Mill (local)
Adams - Renfrew Mill #2 (local)
Belchertown - Walker Collis House (local)
Hudson - Col. Adelbert Mossman House (local)
Lenox - Lenox Academy (state)
✓ Lenox - The "Church on the Hill" (local)
New Bedford - Dawson Building (local)
New Marlborough - New Marlborough Village Historic District (local)
North Andover - Machine Shop Village (state)
Pittsfield - Wollison- Shipton Building (local)
Rockport - Sewall-Scripture House (local)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board considerations 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
Registration Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

CJ/mas

